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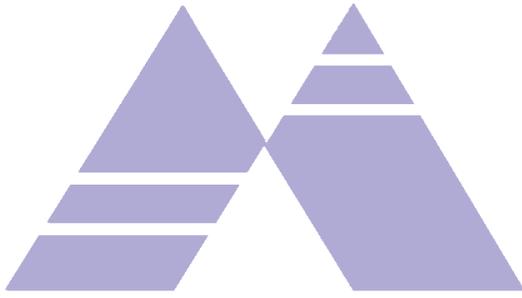
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Fabricating Palestinian History

Are the Negev Bedouin an Indigenous People?

by Havatzelet Yahel, Ruth Kark, and Seth J. Frantzman

In the last two decades, there has been widespread application of the term “indigenous” in relation to various groups worldwide. However, the meaning of this term and its uses tend to be inconsistent and variable. The expression derives from the interaction of different cultures—the meeting between the original inhabitants of a specific region (known variously as “first nations,” “natives,” “indigenes,” or “aborigines”) and new, foreign “settlers” or “colonizers,” who imposed their alien value systems and way of life on the indigenous populations.¹

In Israel, the indigenes claim has been raised over the past few years by the country’s Bedouin citizens, a formerly nomadic, Arabic-speaking group centered in the southern arid part of the country, the Negev. They argue that Israel denies their basic indigenous rights such as maintaining their traditions and owning their own lands.

Does this claim hold water? What are its implications for Israel as well as for other nations?

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

What is known today as international law developed in Europe from the seventeenth cen-

ture onward, parallel to the emergence of sovereign nation states, with the objective of regulating relations between these new entities. Traditionally, international law made no mention of group rights, which were considered a domestic concern of the state.²

International law was reluctant to further group rights for several reasons, among them concern for the integrity of the state and fear of separatism that would undermine its stability.³

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1 S. James Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples in International Law*, 2d ed. (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 3.

2 Natan Lerner, *Group Rights and Discrimination in International Law*, 2d ed. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and Kluwer Law International, 2003), p. 112; Robbie Sabel and Hila Adler, eds., *Mishpat Benleumy* (Jerusalem: Sacher Institute, 2010), p. 241.

Furthermore, group rights were considered contradictory to the concept of a modern state based on a direct social contract between the citizen and the sovereign.

Over time, however, the idea of group rights for indigenous groups began to emerge. Indigenous societies claimed that their position was unique in view of the great damage to the independent political frameworks that they had maintained from time immemorial, their subjugation to

a regime and lifestyle alien to their culture, and the limitation of the physical area in which they were forced to live. Their case, therefore, centered on revoking this perceived injustice and included demands to preserve sacred sites, traditional crafts, and customs as well as to honor preexisting treaties

to the extent that such had been signed. These societies also insisted on their right to self-determination whether in the choice of group members or in the wider sense of sovereignty. The rights demanded were on behalf of the indigenous group and its common and collective character.⁴

As far as the European colonizers were concerned, legal rights vis-à-vis both preexisting populations and other colonizing nations were based on the doctrine of “discovery.” This maintained that sovereignty over and full ownership of a territory belonged to the nation that discovered the new land.⁵

This doctrine was upheld multiple times by the United States Supreme Court in the nineteenth century, and courts of additional nations followed suit.⁶ In Australia, the British Crown used the argument of *terra nullius* (empty land, namely an unoccupied territory with no sovereignty or recognized system of rights) to justify its classification as crown land.⁷ However, beginning in the eighteenth century, it was conceded in courts of various states that the population that lived in a territory before the advent of the Europeans did possess rights. Legal arguments focused on the question of whether, prior to the arrival of the colonizers, a system of land rights already existed in a specific territory that had to be taken into account, and if so, in what manner.⁸

Early attempts by indigenous peoples to bring their case before international forums began in the 1920s.⁹ Their first successes, however, came decades later when activity shifted from domestic arenas to regional, and later, international organizations. On the international level, the issue of indigenesness was advanced in three major frameworks. The first comprised two covenants adopted by the International Labor Organization, an affiliate of the United Nations: the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention of 1957 (No. 107), and later, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989 (No. 169)¹⁰—neither of which was successfully implemented.

The second framework consisted of the ef-

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples refers to the land rights of a collective body, not individuals.

3 Lerner, *Group Rights and Discrimination*, p. 111; Borhan U. Khan and Muhammad M. Rahman, “Protection of Minorities: A South Asian Discourse,” *The European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano*, Italy, 2009; Arif Dirlik, “Globalization, Indigenism, and the Politics of Place,” *New Bulgarian University, anthropology dept.*, accessed Feb. 23, 2011; Ruth Gavison and Tali Balfur, “Zhuyot Kibutzot shel Miutum,” working paper, submitted to the Constitutional Committee, Sept. 13, 2005.

4 Patrick Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 335; Lerner, *Group Rights and Discrimination*, p. 115; Siegfried Wiessner, “Rights and Status of Indigenous Peoples: A Global Comparative and International Legal Analysis,” *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 12 (1999): 99.

5 Robert J. Miller, “The Doctrine of Discovery,” in *idem, et al., Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 2.

6 *Johnson v. M’cintosh*, 21 U.S. 543, 5 L.Ed. 681, 8 Wheat. 543 (1823); *Worcester v. State of Georgia*, 31 U.S. 515 (1832); *St. Catharine’s Milling and Lumber Company v. the Queen* (Canada, 1887); *Mabo and Others v. Queensland* (Aus.), no. 2, AU 1992, 175 CLR1.

7 Erica-Irene Daes, “Indigenous Peoples and their Relationship to Land,” UNE/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/21, U.N. Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, June 11, 2001, p. 11.

8 See, for example, “Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion,” *International Court of Justice reports*, The Hague, Oct. 16, 1975, p. 12.

9 *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples*, Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, New York, p. 2, accessed Mar. 19, 2012.

10 *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989*, International Labor Organization, Geneva, June 27, 1989; Lerner, *Group Rights and Discrimination*, p. 112.

forts of organizations such as the World Bank, which since the 1990s began to list indigenous rights as an issue of concern in its dealing with countries, especially in the Third World.¹¹

The third framework was informal action within various forums of the U.N. dealing with human rights. This included initiating conferences¹² and promoting study of the topic. Beginning in 1971, the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) conducted an extensive study of the issue of native populations.¹³ Carried out over a period of about ten years, the research was published in a series of reports submitted between 1981 and 1986. In 1982, the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established, charged with protecting native populations and the development of international standards relating to their rights.¹⁴ A draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP)¹⁵ was enjoined in 1985, and almost twenty years later in 2006, was finally submitted to the U.N. General Assembly and approved the next year with the support of more than 140 nations. Four nations that voted against it (the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) eventually withdrew their opposition. Israel did not participate in the voting.¹⁶ During this time, the assembly declared 1995-2004 to be the "International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples" and established a permanent forum on this issue within



Far from being the indigenous inhabitants, the Bedouin were relative latecomers to the Negev, preying on the villages and caravansaries that dotted the sparsely populated wilderness. Here, a Bedouin family is pictured in the early 1900s.

the framework of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.¹⁷ The assembly declared a second decade on December 20, 2004.¹⁸

Much of the delay in presenting DRIP centered on differences of opinion related to the concept of sovereignty¹⁹ as well as the definition of indigenous.²⁰ Since no consensus was reached on this crucial definition, the problem was circumvented by deleting it from the draft.²¹ Numerous countries, mainly from Asia and Africa, made qualifying statements regarding their support for

11 "Operational Directive: Indigenous Peoples," *The World Bank Operational Manual*, 4.20, Sept. 1991, pp. 1-6.

12 See, for example, Conference on Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, Geneva, 1977; World Council of Indigenous Peoples, Kiruna, Sweden, 1977; *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples*, accessed Mar. 19, 2012.

13 "The Problem of Indigenous Population," ECOSOC Res. 1589 (L), 50th Session Supplement, no.1, U.N. Doc. E/5044, May 21, 1971, p. 16.

14 Robert A. Williams, Jr., "Frontier of Legal Thoughts III: Encounters on the Frontiers of International Human Rights Law: Redefining the Terms of Indigenous Peoples' Survival in the World," *Duke Law Journal*, Sept. 1990, p. 676.

15 Lerner, *Group Rights and Discrimination*, p. 115.

16 *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), Oct. 2, 2007.

17 U.N. General Assembly resolution 48/63, New York, Dec. 21, 1993; U.N. General Assembly resolution 49/214, New York, Dec. 23, 1994.

18 U.N. General Assembly resolution 59/174, New York, Dec. 20, 2004.

19 Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples*, p. 97.

20 Sarah Pritchard, "Working Group on Indigenous Population: Mandate, Standard-setting Activities and Future Perspectives," in Sarah Pritchard, ed., *Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations and Human Rights* (London: Zed Books and Leichhardt: Federation Press, 1998), p. 43; Wiessner, "Rights and Status of Indigenous Peoples," p. 99; Lerner, *Group Rights and Discrimination*, p. 112.

21 John A. Mills, "Legal Constructions of Cultural Identity in Latin America: An Argument against Defining 'Indigenous Peoples,'" *Texas Hispanic Journal of Law and Policy*, Mar. 2002, p. 57.

the declaration. Indonesia for example, with its hodgepodge of ethnicities and languages, argued that “the rights in the Declaration accorded exclusively to indigenous people and did not apply in the context of Indonesia.”²² A more restricted view

Jewish attachment to the land from the Negev to the Golan Heights predates Arab presence there by millennia.

of indigenusness had been articulated as early as 1999 by Miguel Alfonso Martinez, then special rapporteur of the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations. His view is consistent with a concept that indigenusness is relevant to countries where there is a “two-stage model” of first in-

habitants and colonizers and is less relevant or completely irrelevant in an environment of multi-stage historical development.²³

The final version of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in 2007, also did not include a definition of an indigenous people, mainly because the relevant U.N. bodies were unable to agree on the matter.²⁴ This has contributed to the low level of de facto implementation of the declaration among U.N. member states.

WHAT IS AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE?

Despite the absence of a universally accepted definition, DRIP manages to shed some light on the question of what an indigenous people is: a separate political entity with unique characteristics within the framework of the state. According to its articles, such entity or nation has the sovereign right to determine the structure of its institutions, its identity, and its membership.²⁵

22 U.N. media release, New York, Sept. 13, 2007.

23 Miguel Alfonso Martinez, “Human Rights of Indigenous People: Study on Treaties, Agreements and Other Constructive Arrangements between States and Indigenous Populations,” 1999, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/20, paras. 78, 91.

24 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, G.A. Res. 61/295, U.N. doc. A/RES/61/295, Sept. 13, 2007.

25 *Ibid.*, arts. 33, 35.

Moreover, the declaration differentiates between rights accruing to individuals and to the collective body; articles dealing with land rights refer only to the rights of indigenous peoples as a collective body, not as individuals.

Based on this declaration and the existing literature,²⁶ a list of recurring parameters of indigenusness can be established:

- Original inhabitants: Indigenes are descendants of the people who were first in a particular territory.²⁷
- Time duration: Indigenous people have lived on the land “from time immemorial”—thousands, and even tens of thousands of years. The Australian aborigines, for example, have lived in their territory for anywhere between 40,000 and 60,000 years while Native Americans claim a history of thousands of years. Another related attribute is that indigenous people were on the land before newcomers arrived.²⁸
- Pre-colonial sovereignty.
- Experience of oppression by a foreign culture and legal regime. While many groups may sense having being oppressed, oppression in this context refers to “colonialism or something like colonialism.”²⁹
- Group attachment to land: Indigenous peoples maintain a unique, common relationship of a spiritual nature with the land on which they live or have lived.³⁰ This

26 See, for example: José R. Martínez Cobo, “Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous People,” 1987, UN E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4, p. 29; Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), p. 19; Wiessner, “Rights and Status of Indigenous Peoples,” p. 60.

27 David Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State*, 2d ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002), p. 6; U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, June 13, 1992, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.151q/26 (vol. 3) at 16 annex 2 (1992), chap. 26, quoted in Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples*, p. 315.

28 Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples*, p. 5.

29 *Ibid.*

30 Daes, “Indigenous Peoples,” p. 9.

misleading. To begin with, the Bedouin are by no means the only people who can lay claim to the notion of being a “first people” in Palestine: Jewish attachment to the land predates Arab presence there by millennia. Indeed, of the countless groups that have lived in Palestine since antiquity, Jews are the only nation that can claim an uninterrupted presence on the land from biblical times to date—for a significant amount of the time as its rulers.

For the Jewish people, Mandate Palestine was its ancestral homeland.

About three millennia ago, a kingdom of Israel was established in the landmass from the Negev in the south to the Golan Heights in the north. At one stage, it was split into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria in the eighth century B.C.E., and a portion of its population was exiled. The southern kingdom of Judah, which exercised sovereignty over the Negev, continued to exist until it fell in the sixth century B.C.E. to the Babylonians, who exiled a considerable segment of the populace. The Babylonian Empire was soon, thereafter, conquered by the Persians, who allowed the exiled Jews to return to their homeland in 538 B.C.E. In addition to the returning Jews, the land was peopled at this time by Idumeans (Edomites), the remnant of the Philistines, Samaritans (a mixture of Israelites and Assyrian colonists), and some Arab groups, likely the ancestors of those who would come to be called the Nabateans.

Over the course of approximately four centuries, the country was under the control of various non-Jewish rulers, but from 141-63 B.C.E., the sovereign Jewish kingdom of the Hasmonean dynasty was established, eventually falling within the sphere of Rome, which ruled it with some minor hiatus for the next seven centuries. With the Muslim conquest of the seventh century C.E., there began an increased movement of Arab tribes into the area. Over the next nine centuries, various foreign Muslim and non-Muslim occupiers controlled the land, culminating in the Ottoman conquest in 1517.³⁶

Since its advent in the seventh century, Islam constituted the organizing principle of the sociopolitical order underpinning the long string of great Muslim empires.³⁷ Islamic principles became the framework that brought Arab tribes together, served as a unifying force for social organization, and invested the empire with political legitimacy with the sultan-caliph recognized as the religious and temporal head of (most of) the world Muslim community.³⁸ Tribal lifestyle and customs also became an integral part of the systems of government and law.³⁹ Courts were established throughout the empire that passed judgment according to Shari‘a (Islamic law), an Ottoman land law formalized in 1858, and other civil jurisprudence codified in 1876 as the Ottoman *Mejelle*.⁴⁰

During World War I, Britain took control of the land and in 1922 was appointed the mandatory administrator for Palestine by the League of Nations with the specific goal of facilitating the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine as envisaged by the Balfour declaration. The British Mandate in Palestine continued utilizing most of the existing Ottoman legal system, including laws related to land.⁴¹ With the establishment of Israel, the Provisional State Council (the temporary parliament antecedent to the Knesset) enacted the Law and Administration Ordinance of 1948 that maintained the existing legal system with its roots in Ottoman law.⁴²

Thus, in contrast to colonies in which Western powers imposed a foreign legal system, in

36 Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 23-40.

37 Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 9-20.

38 Ira M. Lapidus, “Tribes and State Formation in Islamic History,” in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, eds. (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 42, 44.

39 Abraham Sochowolski, *Adam—Adama Mishpat—Safa* (Tel Aviv: Hagigim, 2001), p. 74.

40 Pliah Albek and Ran Fleisher, *Diney Mekarkein Be-Israel* (Jerusalem: Albek and Fleisher, 2005), p. 7; Daniel Friedmann, “The Effect of the Foreign Law on the Law of Israel: Remnants of the Ottoman Period,” *Israel Law Review*, 10 (1975): 196.

41 Bernard Joseph, “Palestine Legislation under the British,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 164 (1932): 39-46.

42 *Law and Administration Ordinance*, Provisional Council of State, Tel Aviv, May 19, 1948.

Mandate Palestine, and later Israel, the judicial system that developed over the years was grounded in the norms of tribal life and the Muslim population. More important, neither the British nor the Israelis considered the land *terra nullius* to which the old European doctrine of discovery applied for the simple reason that it was neither “empty” nor “discovered.” As far as the Jewish people was concerned, Mandate Palestine was its ancestral homeland, and it was the general recognition of this fact that underlay the League of Nations’ mandate for the establishment of a Jewish national home there.

THE NEGEV BEDOUIN

Until the twentieth century the Bedouin of the Middle East, including those of the Negev, were livestock-raising nomads whose movements were dictated by a constant search for pasture and water.⁴³ It has long been noted that what characterizes the Bedouin is their relationship to the tribe, rather than to a specific place or territory.⁴⁴

Among the Bedouin tribes living in the Negev today, most view themselves as descendants of nomadic tribes from the Arabian Peninsula.⁴⁵ In fact, most of them arrived fairly recently, during the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, from the deserts of Arabia, Transjordan, Sinai, and Egypt.⁴⁶ Part of this migration occurred in the wake of Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt and Palestine in 1798-99 and subsequent Egyptian rule under Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha (r. 1831-41). During this period, Egyptian forces moved through Sinai and into the Negev using

the coastal road that runs through Rafah, accompanied by numerous camp followers, peasants, and Bedouin. Some of the Egyptian peasants who followed in the footsteps of the army established new settlements and neighborhoods in Palestine, others joined Bedouin tribes in the Negev.⁴⁷

Ottoman tax registers demonstrate that the tribes which lived in the Negev in 1596-97 are not those residing there today.⁴⁸ According to historians Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, the tax registers that reflect material collected in those years show names of forty-three Bedouin tribes living in what became Mandatory Palestine, including six in the Negev. There is not much information on what became of those tribes.⁴⁹ However, the names of the tribes currently living in the Negev do not appear on the tax registers from 1596.⁵⁰ The Ottoman government did not maintain reliable records for this area after 1596, so these registers are the best indicators of which tribes existed in the early Ottoman period. Clinton Bailey, a scholar of Bedouin culture, also found no evidence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of the continuity or existence of Bedouin tribes, which later lived in the Negev in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵¹

Bedouin consolidation of their Negev foothold was achieved through armed intertribal struggles as well as raids on established Arab

The Bedouin tribes in the Negev today view themselves as descendants of nomadic tribes from the Arabian Peninsula.

43 Emanuel Marx, “The Tribe as Subsistence Unit: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East,” *American Anthropologist*, June 1977, p. 345.

44 Clinton Bailey, *Ha-Beduim* (Sede-Boqer: Midreshet Sede-Boqer, 1969), pp. 1, 6.

45 Toviyah Ashkenazi, *Ha-Beduim Be-Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem: Reuben Mass Publishing House, 1957), p. 30; Joseph Ben-David, *Ha-Beduim Be-Yisrael—Hebetim Hevratyim Ve-Karkaiim* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute of Israel Studies, 2004), pp. 36, 57-9, 424-81; Reuven Aharoni, *The Pasha’s Bedouin* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 30-1.

46 Moshe Sharon, “Ha-Beduim Be-Eretz Yisrael Bameot Ha-Shmone Esre Ve-Ha-Tsha-Esre,” M.A. thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1964, pp. 21-4.

47 Gideon M. Kressel and Reuven Aharoni, “Masa’u Uhlusim Memitzrayim La-Levant Bameot Ha-19 Ve-Ha 20,” *Jama’a*, 12 (2004): 206-45; telephone interview with Gideon Kressel, Mar. 8, 2012.

48 Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century* (Erlangen: Palm and Enke, 1977), p. 3.

49 *Ibid.*, pp. 51-3.

50 *Ibid.*

51 Clinton Bailey, “Dating the Arrival of the Bedouin Tribes in Sinai and the Negev,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 28 (1980): 21-4; *idem*, “The Negev in the 19th Century,” *Asian and African Studies*, 14 (1980): 42, 45.



Bedouin tents, Tel Megiddo, Israel, 2005. Until the twentieth century, the Bedouin of the Middle East, including those of the Negev, were livestock-raising nomads whose movements were dictated by a constant search for pasture and water. What characterizes the Bedouin is their relationship to the tribe, rather than to a specific place or territory.

settlements that caused the latter's demise.⁵² Although the nomads depended upon sedentary populations for survival, they looked down upon them while settled Arabs viewed the Bedouin as opportunists or worse, as cruel robbers.⁵³ Numerous authors have documented the Bedouin role in conquering the Negev as well as the plundering and expulsion of settled Arabs from other parts of Palestine.⁵⁴ British surveyor and arche-

ologist Claude R. Conder, writing in the 1880s, described a situation of unending war between the Bedouin tribes and the settled villagers.⁵⁵

Nomadism continued in Palestine until the beginning of the twentieth century when a transition to semi-nomadic life and settlement took place.⁵⁶ Concurrently, there was a gradual shift in the manner in which the Bedouin related to the land, from common exploitation for grazing by all members of the tribe to private use.⁵⁷ Simultaneously, there was a gradual transition from animal husbandry to agriculture.⁵⁸ By 2000, animal husbandry was practiced by only about 10 percent of the Bedouin, and many of the younger generation have expressed reservations about maintaining their parents' lifestyle.⁵⁹

Prior to the establishment of Israel there were about 65,000 Negev Bedouin. During the 1948 war and in its immediate aftermath, most left for neighboring states, reducing the Negev Bedouin population to about 11,000.⁶⁰ Since then, however, numbers have dramatically increased to almost 200,000 persons in 2011. There has also been significant improvement in edu-

52 Sharon, "Ha-Beduim Be-Eretz Yisrael," p. 49; Joseph Ben-David, "Od Al Ha-Konflikt Ha-Karkai bein Beduei Ha-Negev Levain Ha-Medina," *Karka* 44 (1998): 64; Emanuel Marx, *Ha-Hevra Ha-Beduim Ba-Negev* (Tel Aviv: Reshafim, 1974), p. 15; Emanuel Marx, *Bedouin of the Negev* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), p. 7.

53 Anatoly M. Khazanov, ed., *Nomads and the Outside World*, 2nd ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), p. 199; Aref al-Aref, *Bedouin Love Law and Legend: Dealing Exclusively with the Badu of Beersheba* (Jerusalem: Cosmos, 1944; repr. 1974), p. 202; Ben-David, *Ha-Beduim Be-Yisrael*, p. 17; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography*, p. 11.

54 Avraham Granovski, *Ha-Mishlar Ha-Karkai Be-Eretz Yisrael* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1949), p. 32; David H.K. Amiran, "The Pattern of Settlement in Palestine," *Israel Exploration Journal*, 3 (1953): 69; see, also, Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography*, p. 62; Muhammad Yusuf Sawaed, "Ha-Beduim Be-Eretz Yisrael Bein Ha-Shanim 1804 and 1908," M.A. thesis, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, 1992, p. 147-9; Eliahu Epstein, "Bedouin of the Negeb," *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly*, 71 (1939): 59-78.

55 Claude R. Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine* (London: A. P. Watt, 1895), p. 271.

56 Ashkenazi, *Ha-Beduim Be-Eretz Yisrael*, p. 23; Marx, "The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence," p. 348.

57 Avinoam Meir, "Hithavut Ha-Territorialiyut Be-Kerev Bedvey Ha-Negev Bama'aver Me-Navadut le-Hityashvut Keva," *Mehkarim Be-Geographiya shel Eretz Yisrael*, 14 (1984): 76.

58 Gideon M. Kressel, Joseph Ben-David, and Khalil Abu-Rabi'a, "Changes in the Land Usage by the Negev Bedouin since the Mid-19th Century: The Intra-Tribal Perspective," *Nomadic People*, 28 (1991): 29.

59 A. Allan Degen, Roger W. Benjamin, and Jan C. Hoorweg, "Bedouin Households and Sheep Production in the Negev Desert, Israel," *Nomadic People*, 1 (2000): 130, 142.

60 H. V. Muhsam, "Sedentarization of the Bedouin in Israel," *International Social Science Journal*, 4 (1959): 542.

cation and in health indices among Israeli Bedouin. However, when compared with other groups in Israeli society, including urban and rural Arabs, they remain at the lowest socioeconomic level.⁶¹

In the 1970s, about 3,000 Bedouin filed claims demanding that Israel recognize their full private ownership of hundreds of thousands of dunams of land in the Negev (1 dunam=1000 m²), including the right to sell. Israeli courts, basing their decision on Ottoman and British law, have consistently refused to sanction the Bedouin claims. The courts have decreed that the lands claimed were never allocated for private use, and that they are of the category of *mewat* (defined by the Ottoman land law as the area of waste land that lies beyond the carry of the human voice when uttered from the nearest habitation). It is public land and cannot be assigned as privately owned.⁶² Currently, there are no claims before Israeli courts for collective land rights, and there is no expressed interest in land for collective grazing or for the maintenance of nomadic traditions.

ARE THE NEGEV BEDOUIN INDIGENOUS?

While there is no universally agreed-upon definition of indigenous, do the Bedouin of the Negev fit the previously outlined parameters for what constitutes an indigenous people? Using such criteria, the answer is an unequivocal No:

- *Original inhabitants.* Many groups preceded the Bedouin in Palestine in general and in the Negev in particular, including the Jewish people, which has maintained uninterrupted presence in the land since

biblical times. Hence, the Bedouin can hardly claim to be the country's original inhabitants.

- *Time dimension.* This requires a lengthy presence in a territory—the so-called “time immemorial” parameter. But the Negev Bedouin have been there for only two centuries. Nor can they claim presence in the land before the arrival of the foreign power as the imperial Ottoman presence there predated that of the Bedouin by centuries. By contrast, the Jewish presence in Palestine fully corresponds to the “from time immemorial” parameter.

There is no evidence of long-standing Bedouin traditions relating to the Negev.

- *Sovereignty.* In the case of the Negev Bedouin, they were never sovereign in the area. When they arrived, the Negev was already under Ottoman rule, before coming under British, then Israeli sovereign authority.

- *Oppression by a foreign culture and legal regime.* It was, in fact, the Bedouin who imposed themselves on established settlers in the Negev, displacing them and destroying their villages. The Ottoman Muslim order, which they confronted upon arrival, was similar to what they had experienced in the other parts of the empire from which they migrated to Palestine. Britain was indeed a foreign power, but it never attempted to colonize Palestine as its presence there was transitory from the start in line with the League of Nations mandate. As for the Jews, far from being colonial intruders, they were descendants of the country's ancient inhabitants, authorized by the international community—as represented by the League of Nations—to reestablish their independence in the ancestral homeland.

- *Unique spiritual relationship to the ter-*

61 Eliezer Goldberg, et al., *Din Ve-Heshbon Ha-Vaada Le-Hatzaat Mediniut Le-Hasdarat Hityashvut Ha-Beduin Ba-Negev* (Jerusalem: Medinat Israel, 2008), p. 39.

62 *Hawashla ve-Aherim Neged Medinat Yisrael ve-Aherim*, Court of Appeal, 21 8/74, 38(3) P.D. 141; Justice Tute, “The Law of State Lands in Palestine,” *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law*, 3rd series, 4 (1927): 165-82.

No other Bedouin tribe in the entire Middle East has raised a claim to indigenously.

ritory. While nomadic life, by definition, precludes permanent attachment to specific territory, pastoral lands do become a significant element in Bedouin life given their importance for tribal subsistence. Furthermore, even today, control of an area is a matter of honor among the Bedouin, and any challenge to this control, however legitimate or legal, is considered an insult.⁶³

Nonetheless, there is no evidence of long-standing Bedouin traditions relating to the Negev, a logical situation considering their fairly short presence

there and nomadic lifestyle, and they look to the Arabian Peninsula as their historical homeland.

Moreover, the Bedouin are not currently asking for collective land rights, rather all their claims are formulated on an individual basis (overwhelmingly by males with almost total exclusion of women), demanding the right of individuals to sell land and transfer it to a third party.⁶⁴ These private demands are not congruent with the spiritual dimension parameter and even contradict it, which leads to the conclusion that the main Bedouin aspirations are for private gain and have no real collective element relevant to a campaign for recognition as indigenes.

- *A minority with an identity different from that of the general population.* The Bedouin are, without doubt, a small minority in Israel, not only of the entire population but even within the country's Arab citizens. Indeed, until the middle of the Mandate period, the Bedouin were con-

sidered by the Palestinian Arab peasants as their enemies.⁶⁵

Recently there have been signs of an abandonment of an independent Bedouin identity and the gradual adoption of a Palestinian Arab identity accompanied by increasing involvement in Muslim fundamentalism.⁶⁶ A 2003 study concluded that the Bedouin should no longer be considered a "society unto themselves" and that their identity today is Palestinian Arab, lacking any common tribal element, and is in the process of being shaped anew. It further claimed there was an ulterior motive behind the long-standing categorization of a separate Bedouin identity: to negate the national Palestinian Arab identity.⁶⁷ The last conclusion, however, flies in the face of historical evidence, ignoring the unambiguous Ottoman view of the Bedouin as a separate group, long before the advent of confrontation between the Arab and Jewish populations of Palestine.

- *A group with separate economic, social, cultural, and political institutions.* In the past, Bedouin tribes behaved as separate units with an accepted leadership in the person of tribal sheiks. Tribes had a system of customs that governed all aspects of life, and each of them was an independent economic and social group; occasionally several tribes would join together politically to form a confederation. Today, the situation has changed dramatically. Studies attest to a significant weakening of the framework that handled tribal affairs and of tribes' ability to come to decisions acceptable to all individuals. Institutions that formerly made decisions within the tribe or in intertribal relations no longer exist today.⁶⁸

Customary law and values necessary

63 Aref al-Aref, *Toldot Be'er Sheva Ve-Shvateha: Shivtey Ha-Beduim Bemahoz Be'er Sheva* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 2000), photocopy of first edition, Tel-Aviv: Bustenay, 1937, p. 273.

64 See the statement of Hussein el-Rifaaya to the committee headed by Justice Goldberg, Goldberg et al., *Report*, session of Feb. 7, 2008.

65 Conder, *Tent Life*, p. 71.

66 Ben-David, *Ha-Beduim Be-Yisrael*, pp. 21, 29.

67 Musa el-Hujeirat, "Ha-Zehut Ha-Kolektivit Shel Ha-Beduim Be-Eretz Yisrael," *Reshimot Be-Nose Ha-Beduim*, 35 (2003): 6.

68 Ben-David, *Ha-Beduim Be-Yisrael*, p. 21.

when the Bedouin were nomads, such as mutual responsibility, are no longer relevant.⁶⁹ It would seem that today one cannot speak of Bedouin tribes in the Negev, alone or in confederation, as an operational administrative framework. The end of nomadism and the transition to permanent settlements during the past century have done away with identification of the tribe as a separate economic entity. Today, every household has its own occupation as part of the general economy, and there is no universally acceptable authoritative leadership. Nor are there consequential political frameworks whose decisions are accepted by all even in areas that are of primary importance to indigenous peoples, such as lands. Decisions relating to land are taken only by individuals; any declaration in the name of the tribe or in the name of the Bedouin is, therefore, not legitimate. There have been no demands by individual Bedouins to subordinate themselves once again to an internal, independent tribal framework. The opposite is the case: The tendency today is to increase individual rights. Authority that formerly rested with the sheik vis-à-vis his tribe, including matters relating to land usage, was abrogated after members of the tribe claimed that such authority was superfluous and that the sheiks exploited it to further their own interests at the expense of ordinary tribesmen. Despite the disappearance of an authority to manage and operate tribal matters, and the absence of tribal political frameworks, specific customs and traditions continue to exist as part of Bedouin customary law, but mainly in certain spheres of personal and family life such as marriage and inheritance rights.⁷⁰

69 Ibid., pp. 335-6, 352.

70 Khalil Abu Rabia, *Shlosha Maagalim Badin: Ha-Konflikt Bein Ha-Minhag Ha-Bedvi, Hukey Ha-Sharia Ve-Hok Medinat Yisrael* (Beersheba: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2011), pp. 13-4; Clinton Bailey, *Bedouin Law from Sinai and the Negev: Justice without Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 300-1.

• *The group identifies itself, and is viewed by others, as an indigenous people in the territory.* As has been demonstrated, the Bedouin claim to indigenity is very new, having been raised for the first time only a few years ago.⁷¹ Earlier studies did not report that the Negev Bedouin consider themselves as such, nor did the researchers make the claim that they were an indigenous people. Since Bedouin tribes in other Middle Eastern countries have never claimed indigenity, the validity of this claim by the Negev Bedouin is doubtful. Are the Bedouin somehow indigenous only in relation to the Negev but not in their homeland—Arabia—or in other Middle Eastern countries in which they abound?⁷² Even parts of the same tribes as those in the Negev that live elsewhere, for example, in the Sinai, do not claim indigenity in their countries of residence.

Bedouin institutions that formerly made decisions within the tribe or in intertribal relations no longer exist.

CONCLUSIONS

Although there is no official definition of indigenity in international law, Negev Bedouin cannot be regarded as an indigenous people in the commonly accepted sense. If anything, the

71 Alexandre Kedar, "Land Settlement in the Negev in International Law Perspective," *Adalah's Newsletter*, Dec. 2004, pp. 1-7; Elana Boteach, "The Bedouins in the Negev as an Indigenous Population: A Report Submitted to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations," *The Negev Coexistence Forum Newsletter*, Beersheba, Sept. 2005, p. 2; Ismael Abu Saad, "The Education of Israel's Negev Bedouin: Background and Prospects," *Israel Studies*, 2 (1997): 21-39; "Off the Map," Human Rights Watch, New York, Mar. 30, 2008, pp. 78-80; James Anaya, "Report by the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples," A/HRC/18/35/Add.1, Aug. 22, 2011.

72 See Seth Frantzman, Havatzelet Yahel, and Ruth Kark, "Contested Indigenity: The Development of an Indigenous Discourse on the Bedouin of the Negev, Israel," *Israel Studies*, Spring 2012, pp. 78-105.

Bedouin have more in common with the European settlers who migrated to other lands, coming into contact with existing populations with often unfortunate results for the latter.

Moreover, rather than suffering an alien imposition on their indigenous way of life, the Bedouin migrated mainly from one part of the Ottoman Empire to another, governed by the same system of administration and legislation with which they were familiar and which the British and the Israelis have subsequently largely maintained.

As clearly demonstrated, the Negev Bedouin

The Jewish spiritual relationship to the land is expressed in daily prayers and in Israel's Declaration of Independence.

do not presently prefer to be a separate and independent entity in various spheres of public life such as economic and political activities. Their aspirations are of an individual nature. They are not interested in maintaining nomadic traditions of collective ownership of lands for the maintenance of a collective community but rather in an exclu-

sively male proprietorship that would enable Bedouin men to sell the land to others at their own discretion. No studies have shown the existence today of functioning, independent institutions in various spheres of daily life that could point to the Bedouin being an indigenous people.

That no other Bedouin tribe in the entire Middle East has raised a claim to indigenusness raises questions regarding the motivations and authenticity of such an argument. Since the Bedouin in the Negev in some cases are from the same tribe as those found in neighboring countries, it is not logical that they can only be indig-

enous when they are on the Israeli side of the border.

The entire question of indigenusness is particularly problematic with regard to Israel. The fear is that instead of providing remedies and established order, it will create new disputes. The Land of Israel has a dual history, marked both by constant waves of immigration and invasion by various peoples and uninterrupted Jewish presence in the land from time immemorial. The Jews have always considered the Land of Israel their national homeland, have lived in it as a sovereign nation in historical times, maintained at least a toehold there despite persecution, and returned to it time and again after being exiled. This spiritual relationship is also expressed in both Jewish daily prayers and Israel's Declaration of Independence. If the parameters and preconditions for indigenusness are made more flexible to include arrivistes like the Bedouin, surely Jews can also raise a claim to be the indigenous people in Israel, a land which they called home thousands of years before the Negev Bedouin.⁷³ In such a case, it may also be expected that other ethnic groups, such as Druze, Christian Arabs, and Samaritans, would claim indigenous status. No doubt, this would add to confrontations already existing over control of land and the holy places.

The concept of indigenusness was intended to help remedy past injustices by giving native peoples the means to preserve their separate identity, common lifestyle, and the customs of their past. The Negev Bedouin may be a poor and marginal sector of Israeli society, yet this does not transform them into an indigenous people.



⁷³ Allen Z. Hertz, "Aboriginal Rights of the Jewish People," *American Thinker*, Oct. 30, 2011.

Fabricating Palestinian History

The Rhetoric of Nonsense

by Alex Joffe

For nearly two decades the Palestinian Authority (PA) has been denying Israel's right to exist, and a recent "Nakba Day" was no exception. In a Gaza speech on behalf of Mahmoud Abbas, his personal representative made the following statement:

National reconciliation [between Hamas and Fatah] is required in order to face Israel and Netanyahu. We say to him [Netanyahu], when he claims that they [Jews] have a historical right dating back to 3000 years B.C.E.—we say that the nation of Palestine upon the land of Canaan had a 7,000-year history B.C.E. This is the truth, which must be understood, and we have to note it, in order to say: "Netanyahu, you are incidental in history. We are the people of history. We are the owners of history."¹

This remarkable assertion has been almost completely ignored by the Western media. Yet it bears a thorough examination: not only as an indication of unwavering Palestinian rejection of Israel's right to exist but as an insightful glimpse into the psyche of their willfully duped Western champions.

UNPACKING ABBAS'S SPEECH

Archaeologists have only the dimmest notion of prevailing ethnic concepts in 7000 B.C.E. There may have been tribes and clans of some sort, and villages may have had names and a sense of collective or local identity, but their nature is completely unknown. Even with the elaborate symbolism of the period, as seen in figurines, and other data such as the styles of stone tools and house plans, nothing whatsoever is known

regarding the content of the makers' identities. Writing would not be invented for almost another 4,000 years and would only reach the Levant a thousand years after that, bringing with it the ability to record a society's own identity concepts.

There were no Jews or Arabs, Canaanites, Israelites, or Egyptians. There were only Neolithic farmers and herders. In fact, none of the concepts that Abbas used developed until vastly later. The Plst—a Mediterranean group known to the Egyptians as one of the "Sea Peoples" and who gave their name to the biblical Philistines—arrived around 1200 B.C.E. Arabs are known in Mesopotamian texts as residents of the Arabian Peninsula from around 900 B.C.E. The concept of a "nation" emerged with the kingdoms of Israel

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¹ Palestinian TV (Fatah), May 14, 2011.

and Judah and their neighbors sometime after 900 B.C.E. The Romans renamed the Kingdom of Judea “Palestina” after the biblically attested Philistines, the hated enemy of the Israelites, following the defeat of the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E. The ethnic identity called “Palestinian,” denoting the local Muslim and Christian inhabitants of the region south of Lebanon and West of the Jordan

River, tenuously developed as an elite concept at the end of the Ottoman era and did not propagate to the grassroots until the 1920s and 1930s.²

Is there perhaps genetic continuity between modern Palestinians and Neolithic farmers and herders? Perhaps, but that is not what Abbas claimed. Is

there cultural continuity, a nation with a name? Hardly.

There is no cultural or national connection between Palestinians and Neolithic peoples.

TYPES OF PALESTINIAN RHETORIC

Why then should Abbas make such an incredible fabrication? And why lie in such a ludicrous and extravagant fashion? Part of the answer is that for Abbas, as it was for PLO leader Yasser Arafat before him, there is a reflex that simply and absolutely cannot accept the antiquity of Jews. Arafat famously told then-U.S. president Bill Clinton that there was no Jewish temple in Jerusalem, causing the usually unflappable Clinton to nearly explode.³ Denials regarding the Jewish historical connection to the Land of Israel generally and categorical denials that Jews constitute a nation are all frequently heard from Palestinian leaders, intellectuals, and others.

A useful avenue of investigation is to con-

sider Abbas’s words as a type of rhetoric with a form and underlying philosophy. When viewed in this way, Abbas’s spokesman was not lying as such but doing something else.

As philosopher Harry Frankfurt put it

The fact about himself that the bullshitter hides ... is that the truth-values of his statements are of no central interest to him; what we are not to understand is that his intention is neither to report the truth nor to conceal it ... A person who lies is thereby responding to the truth, and he is to that extent respectful of it ... For the bullshitter, however, all these bets are off: He is neither on the side of the true nor on the side of the false. His eye is not on the facts at all, as the eyes of the honest man and of the liar are, except insofar as they may be pertinent to his interest in getting away with what he says. He does not care whether the things he says describe reality correctly. He just picks them out, or makes them up, to suit his purpose.⁴

As Frankfurt describes it, such nonsensical rhetoric is constructed impulsively and without thought—entirely out of whole cloth. It is unconcerned with truth and so, unlike a lie, has license to be panoramic, unconcerned with context. The user is endeavoring to bluff, and the desire for effect is paramount. Whereas lying is austere and rigorous because it must triangulate against truth, nonsense loses, and loosens, the grasp on reality. In that sense, its effect is corrosive, a matter not discussed by Frankfurt.

Stating nonsense to suit one’s purpose is only one of three obvious Palestinian rhetorical strategies. Lying, knowingly distorting the truth, is another. A paradigmatic example of this is “Pallywood,” the staging of scenes for news cameras. These have ranged from orchestrated street scenes and rioting, which sometimes include fake casualties who leap off of stretchers when out of sight, to destroyed structures and grieving families, to manipulated photographs. Above all there

2 Louis H. Feldman, “Some Observations on the Name of Palestine,” *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 61 (1990): 1-23.

3 “Camp David and After: An Exchange, An Interview with Ehud Barak,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 13, 2001.

4 Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 56.

was the so-called Jenin massacre of 2002 and the Muhammad al-Dura case in 2000. In the former, Palestinians accused Israelis of having killed hundreds or thousands of civilians and bulldozing their bodies into mass graves, deliberate lies that were then repeated by human rights organizations. In fact, some fifty-two Palestinian gunmen and twenty-three Israeli soldiers were killed in brutal house to house fighting.⁵

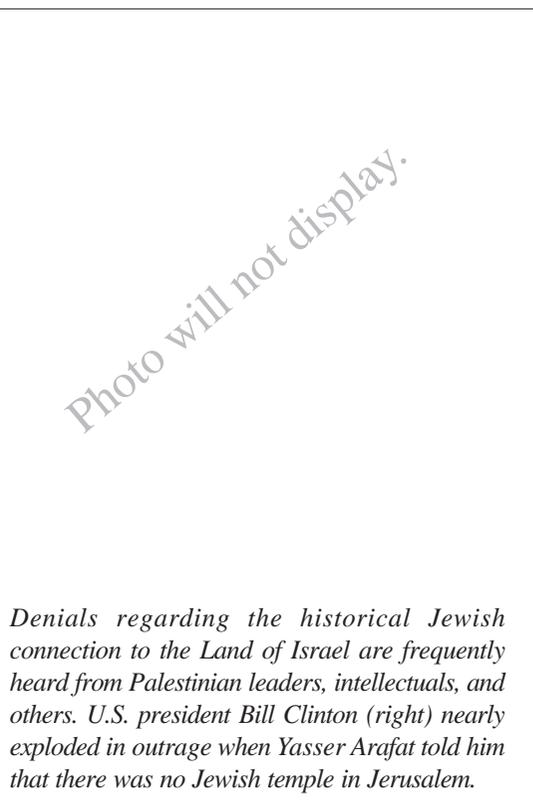
In the Dura case, a Palestinian stringer for French television purported to have observed a Palestinian father and son caught in a firefight in Gaza, during the course of which the boy appeared to have been killed. The iconic martyrdom and funeral of the boy became an international symbol of Israeli brutality. But examination of withheld footage showed other Palestinian “wounded” getting up and walking around and contained no death throes of the Dura boy. In fact, grave doubts exist whether a boy died at all in the exchange and whether his father was injured. A series of lawsuits have not resolved the situation, but the impact of what is at least in large part a fabrication is clear.⁶ As French journalist Catherine Nay wrote with satisfaction, Dura’s supposed death “cancels, erases that of the Jewish child, his hands in the air before the SS in the Warsaw Ghetto.”⁷ This statement holds the key to understanding the reception of Palestinian rhetoric in Europe. It is a means to erode historical and moral realities regarding the European treatment of the Jews, and it is eagerly embraced in some quarters.

The third Palestinian approach is to propagandize through the lens of pure ideology, specifically Islam. Thus, for example, the former

5 See the essays in Hersh Goodman and Jonathan Cummings, eds., *The Battle of Jenin: A Case Study in Israel's Communications Strategy* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 2003).

6 Philippe Karsenty, “We Need to Expose the Muhammad al-Dura Hoax,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2008, pp. 57-65; Nidra Poller, “The Muhammad al-Dura Hoax and Other Myths Revived,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2011, pp. 71-8.

7 Ivan Rioufol, “Les médias, pouvoir intouchable?” *Le Figaro* (Paris), June 13, 2008.



Jerusalem mufti and chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem, Ekrima Sabri, was recently quoted as saying “after twenty-five years of digging, archaeologists are unanimous that not a single stone has been found related to Jerusalem’s alleged Jewish history.” This statement is patently false, but the orientation of the religious lens is obvious, indeed, he goes on to state clearly: “We do not recognize any change to the status of Jerusalem, and we reserve our religious, historic, geographic, and cultural heritage in the city, no matter how long or how many generations succeed.”⁸ Islamic doctrine as it has evolved today simply cannot accept the reality of the Jewish connection to Jerusalem precisely on religious grounds. Sabri is, therefore, neither lying nor fabricating reality to suit his purposes but rather expressing what he regards as a true

8 Ahlul Bayt News Agency (Qom, Iran), June 23, 2011.



Palestinians will often ignore archeological findings in order to maintain their fabrications. The recent auction of this Judean shekel coin from 66 C.E., bearing the Hebrew words “Shekel of Israel [Year] 1 [of the Jewish rebellion against Rome]” was described in the official Palestinian Authority daily al-Hayat al-Jadida as “an ancient Palestinian coin” and “part of the Palestinian cultural heritage.”

religious belief. This works in concert with lies and nonsense.

SWALLOWING PALESTINIAN RHETORIC

Palestinian efforts to minimize or expunge Jews from history go back several decades but have intensified in recent years. Palestinian intellectuals make their own important contributions: Hayel Sanduqa recently claimed that the expression in Psalm 137:5, “If I forget thee, oh Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill” was authored by a Crusader king and stolen by “Zionists.”⁹

9 Palestinian TV (Fatah), June 2, 2011, at Palestinian Media Watch, accessed Mar. 1, 2012.

Palestinian denial of any Jewish connections to Israel and allegations that Israel is “Judaizing” Jerusalem are so routine as to be unheard by Israelis, accustomed as they are to Palestinian leaders blustering, lying, and simply making things up, from trivial allegations regarding Israeli “libido-increasing chewing gum” distributed in Gaza¹⁰ to heinous allegations of all manner of war crimes. This is unfortunate since such claims of “Judaization,” largely by means of archaeological excavations and infrastructure modernization, featured for decades in international forums such as UNESCO,¹¹ are central to the global efforts to delegitimize Israel by elevating the Islamic status of Jerusalem.¹²

By and large, the lack of Arab media attention suggests that they also take Palestinian claims with a heaping teaspoon of salt. In the absence of open warfare between Israel and the Palestinians, Arab media today appear preoccupied with more important events in Syria, Egypt, Iran, and elsewhere. Even so, why has there been so little attention to Abbas’s statement?

The Palestinian reception of rhetoric such as Abbas’s is a critical question. Palestinian nationalist rhetoric since the early 1920s was characterized by what even Palestinian-American historian Rashid Khalidi has called “overheated prose.”¹³ From the beginning, it was also suffused with local, pan-Arab and Islamic themes that were sometimes complementary but often in tension with one another. In general, Palestinian rhetoric today takes place in an environment that has been progressively Islamized over the past two decades by Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in part through competition with Hamas and other Islamist and jihadist

10 *YNet News* (Tel Aviv), July 13, 2009.

11 See, for example, the summary in Craig Larkin and Michael Dumper, “UNESCO and Jerusalem: Constraints, Challenges and Opportunities,” *Jerusalem Quarterly*, Autumn 2009, pp. 16-28.

12 Yitzhak Reiter, *Jerusalem and Its Role in Islamic Solidarity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 70-149.

13 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 258, n. 76.

movements.¹⁴ Islamic themes and imagery have helped frame and elaborate political discourse and in turn have intensified the Islamic dimension of Palestinian collective identity.¹⁵

While a full study of language and cognition in Palestinian culture is beyond the scope of this article, it is useful to bear in mind the analysis of Arab societies as “high context” cultures. In such cultures, the domination of in-groups with similar experiences and expectations requires fewer but more carefully selected words that convey complex messages using inferences supplied by the listener. By contrast, communications in “low context” cultures are not aimed at in-groups and, therefore, tend to be more explicit.¹⁶

Seen in this light, Palestinian political statements regarding their Neolithic origins and continuity, which can be regarded in historical, rhetorical, and philosophical terms as completely fictional, might be understood as simply innovative shorthand communications to an in-group. On the one hand, it nominally cites Western scientific frameworks, which demonstrates a sort of modernist orientation. But on the other, the emotive power and real intention is largely supplied by the listener, who hears in effect that Palestinians have existed forever, along with the implication that this fact is supported by history or even science.

Together with lies and ideological speech, fictional nonsense helps shape Palestinian culture, beliefs, and political behavior. To say that this is at odds with objective reality as recovered



Stating nonsense to suit one's purpose is only one Palestinian rhetorical strategy. Knowingly distorting the truth is another. An example of this is “Pallywood,” the staging of scenes for news cameras. This photograph was widely distributed with the observers cropped out and promoted as a picture of an Israel Defense Forces soldier stomping on a Palestinian child. The uniform is not an IDF uniform; the boots are not IDF boots, and the weapon is not one used by the IDF.

by science is to miss the point. To some unknowable but large degree, this is Palestinian reality. What from the outside appears to be disjointed and nonsensical bits in reality are seamless parts of a larger Palestinian whole, beliefs about the history, the world, culture, and the self. The question then becomes the relationship of that reality to others. And here the matter of media as a conduit and interpreter becomes paramount.

The problem is that in-group statements and the reality they create are never restricted to the in-group. Western reception of rhetorical nonsense varies widely. Western media have been silent about the Neolithic Palestinian nation, and this is most instructive. The simplest explanation why Abbas's comments were not mentioned in Western press accounts is that literal nonsense

14 Hillel Frisch, “Nationalizing a Universal Text: The Quran in Arafat's Rhetoric,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, May 2005, pp. 321-36.

15 Mahmoud Mi'ari, “Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Dec. 2009, pp. 579-98.

16 Rhonda S. Zahama, “Understanding Cultural Preferences of Arab Communications Patterns,” *Public Relations Review*, 21 (1995): 241-55.

from Palestinians simply does not register. Although it is not acknowledged, to some extent Palestinian nonsense is likely recognized as such by Western media and filtered out, at least semi-consciously, as “overheated prose.” Ironically, of course, objections to such cultural stereotyping are characteristic of the Orientalist critique although they are rarely made when such analyses come from Arab sources.

WILLING INFIDELS

What Israelis regard as incitement—rhetoric designed to inflame populations and move them to hatred and violence—thus seems to register as mere epiphenomena to other Western audiences, who appear to seek a simple, moralistic tale with materialist underpinnings. By and large, Western media in particular, abetted by intellectuals, have created a singular distortion zone around “Israel/Palestine”—turning it into a clear-cut morality tale of colonial white people with F-16s oppressing indigenous brown people with stones and the odd suicide bomber.

A recent study of how the Arab-Israeli conflict is treated by the Reuters news agency noted the pervasive use of appeals to pity and to pov-

erty, innuendo, euphemisms and loaded words, multiple standards and asymmetrical definitions, card-stacking, symbolic fictions, and atrocity propaganda, along with non-sequiturs and red herrings. The study concludes that “Reuters engages in systematically biased storytelling in favor

of the Arabs/Palestinians and is able to influence audience affective behavior and motivate direct action along the same trajectory.”¹⁷

For most journalists engaged with the moralistic narrative, fantastic stories about Palestinians having existed 9,000 years ago do not even rise to the level of cognitive dissonance; it is, for now, nonsense discourse and anti-realism. But another factor for the lack of Western attention to such statements is found in Frankfurt’s discourse on nonsensical rhetoric; the sincerity of the user cannot be challenged since to do so would require making fundamental judgments. To preserve the fiction of rational interlocutors, sincerity must be accepted as a token of trustworthiness even as the simple words of the statement contradict such claims.

Three other factors also play a role: the postmodern downgrading of objectivity and the idea of a single shared reality; the elevation of multiple narratives as being equally valid, and the valuation of feelings over facts. Challenging rhetorical nonsense, in addition to potentially compromising journalistic access, could hurt interlocutors’ feelings.

There is more than a little condescension at work in the Western reception of these strategies if not actual contempt. For one thing, Palestinians lies and nonsense are rarely challenged by the media or other interpreters besides those termed Israel advocates, something that has itself been transformed into a negative semantic and social category. It is almost as if Palestinians are expected simply to make things up as they go along, which then may or may not be accepted by the West according to how well they fit the Palestinian narrative.

Ideological religious statements are similarly ignored but in all likelihood for different reasons. Non-religious Western observers simply have no intellectual framework to interpret such strong statements outside materialist constructs that regard religion generally as epiphenomenal or false consciousness. For these reasons, the Islamic rather than nationalistic basis for the Arab-Israeli conflict has been systematically downplayed from the 1930s. Even the Hamas charter—which is nothing but forthright regarding its religious basis, theological anti-Semitism, and calls for genocide—is largely excluded from journalistic and even academic analyses because it makes no sense within the

Anti-Semitism and ceaseless incitement are gradually overwhelming filters against anti-realism.

17 Henry I. Silverman, “Reuters: Principles of Trust or Propaganda?” *Journal of Applied Business Research*, Nov./Dec. 2011, pp. 93-116.

context of frameworks that are exclusively nationalistic and materialist in nature.

But the eagerness with which certain lies are accepted, such as talk of Israeli war crimes, and the flimsy nature of Western journalistic investigations strongly shows that at least two additional levels of bias are at work. At one level, the narrative of the oppressed underdog is so strong that there is little inclination to press for truths that would undermine that narrative, embarrass the Palestinians, and in doing so, incur their wrath and limit the media access they give to their territories, sources, and stories. At the deeper level, as perfectly illustrated by the quote from Catherine Nay above, there is a deep need to find Israelis guilty in order to relieve Holocaust guilt (and, one might argue cynically, to get back to old-fashioned anti-Semitism) particularly among European descendents of its perpetrators. The satisfaction of making this so is palpable.

These factors also illustrate how the Palestinian narrative, even with ludicrous bits thrown in and others excluded, is arguably not by or even about the Palestinians. It is propelled largely by Western needs to see the world through the post-colonial lens of noble indigenes and evil Western colonists. The Palestinians may in fact have lost exclusive control of the narrative decades ago, perhaps as far back as the 1920s or 1930s, when their cause was taken over by the Arab states and the Muslim world. A more comprehensive view of the Palestinian narrative would see them as secondary contributors to a process propelled by Arab and Muslim states and refracted through Western media and universities, ultimately minor subjects in a far larger



Part of the reason Western supporters are willing to go along with Palestinian historical revisionism is to compensate for European guilt over past behavior toward the Jews. For example, French journalist Catherine Nay wrote regarding the alleged Muhammad al-Dura killing that the boy's death "cancels, erases that of the Jewish child, his hands in the air before the SS in the Warsaw Ghetto."

discussion between Islam and the West.

The problem is that, thanks to mindless parroting by journalists and human rights organizations of Palestinian lies and nonsense, hatred, anti-Semitism, and ceaseless incitement are gradually overwhelming the filters against anti-realism, particularly in Europe where there are powerful cultural incentives to think ill of Jews and wish ill for Israelis. The effects of this process are seen even more clearly throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds where, though free of Jews, anti-Semitism is all-pervasive.

CONCLUSION

An example of the erosion of Western critical filters was the unchallenged appearance of an opinion piece in *The Washington Post* in December 2011 that effectively repeated some of Abbas's absurd statements regarding the antiquity of the Palestinians. Maen Rashid Areikat, the PLO representative to the United Nations, stated

that Palestinians had “lived under the rule of a plethora of empires: the Canaanites, Egyptians, Philistines, Israelites, Persians, Greeks, Crusaders, Mongols, Ottomans, and finally, the British.” Throwing history out the window, he added

Palestinian rhetorical nonsense resonates deeply with some Christians committed to anti-Zionism.

we are Arabs with black, brown, and white skin, dark- and light-colored eyes, and the whole gamut of hair types. Like Americans, we are a hybrid of peoples defined by one overarching identity. Many in the United States forget that Palestinians are Muslims and Christians.

They ignore the fact that Palestinian Christians are the descendants of Jesus and guardians of the cradle of Christianity.¹⁸

18 Maen Rashid Areikat, “Palestine, a history rich and deep,” *The Washington Post*, Dec. 27, 2011.

Palestinians can simultaneously be Arabs, who arrived in the Levant in the seventh century C.E., and be more ancient than the Canaanites. At the same time, the empires they endured and that infused them include everyone except Arab ones, notably the Umayyad and Abbasid, which brought Arabs and Islam to the region in the first place. The fact-checkers of *The Washington Post* editorial page fall mute and shared reality is eroded further. Unfortunately this sort of rhetorical nonsense resonates deeply, especially with some Christian supersessionists committed to anti-Zionism.¹⁹ History no longer matters.

It is often stated that peace can only come when Israelis and Palestinians recognize one another’s narratives. Claims regarding the Neolithic Palestinian nation indicate this unlikely to occur either in the future or in the past. In the meantime, anti-reality continues to spread.



19 David Wenkel, “Palestinians, Jebusites, and Evangelicals,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2007, pp. 49-56.

Temptation Eyes

Women with attractive eyes may be forced to cover them up under Saudi Arabia’s latest repressive measure, it was reported yesterday.

The ultra-conservative Islamic state has said it has the right to stop women revealing “tempting” eyes in public.

Women in Saudi Arabia already have to wear a long black cloak, called an abaya, cover their hair and, in some regions, conceal their faces while in public.

One report on the Bikya Masr news website suggested the proposal was made after a member of the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice was attracted by a woman’s eyes as he walked along a street, provoking a fight.

The woman was walking with her husband who ended up being stabbed twice in the hand after the altercation.

The Daily Mail, Apr. 17, 2012

Fabricating Palestinian History **Founding National Myths**

by David Bukay

The vast literature proving the historic Jewish connection to the Land of Israel has been extensively manipulated and distorted as part of the Palestinian politics of nationalism. Propaganda, indoctrination, and socialization, both domestically and internationally, are essential parts of the strategy and tactics of asserting Palestinian nationhood and statehood. By appropriating to themselves the values, traditions, and historical facts that belong to the Jews, Palestinians have managed to fabricate a “legitimate” history and political traditions out of nothing while denying those of Israel.

THE PALESTINIAN NATION-BUILDING STRATEGY

Nation-building often involves the invention of foundation myths although these normally require a certain relationship to historic facts, however tenuous. Palestinian leaders, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat and his successors, adopted a different tack: stealing the enemy’s heritage, history, and values, and denying its legitimacy as a people and a state. The Palestinian objectives are to disqualify Israel’s historical standing and to inherit its belongings by delegitimizing and even dehumanizing its national identity and personality.

Palestinian tactics are simple yet sophisticated: preaching and dispersing lies and distortions of reality. History proves that the bigger the lie and the more common its reiteration, the more it is accepted as authentic and genuine. Moreover, most people are unwilling to accept the idea that an entire national leadership would dare to totally distort and fabricate history in full. Part of the Palestinians’ success in doing so

is also due to the fact that most people do not know the history of the Land of Israel and of Jerusalem.

USURPING THE JEWISH, BIBLICAL, AND CHRISTIAN PASTS

Rewriting the history of the Land of Israel by erasing Jewish history and replacing it with a fabricated Palestinian history is a central goal of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and something that the early generations of Palestinian leaders, including the notorious Hajj Amin Husseini, who led the Palestinian Arabs to their 1948 defeat, dared not do. This fictitious history, which ignores all historical documentation and established historical methods, is based on systematic distortions of both ancient and modern history with the aim of denying Israel’s right to exist.

The Palestinian leaders claim lineage from ancient history, describing the Canaanites as their direct ancestors.¹ In the words of the PA presi-

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¹ All references from Palestinian Authority media are taken from Palestinian Media Watch.

THE SUBSTRUCTURES

Leaving the mosque of al-Aqsa by the front entrance, we turn to the left and proceed to the south-east corner of the Haram Area where a staircase leads down in to the vast subterranean substructures known as *Solomon's Stables*. The first flight of steps takes us down to the small chamber, now used as a place of Moslem worship, which was believed in medieval times to have been associated with Jesus Christ's infancy. This belief was prevalent long before the advent of the Crusaders and was subsequently accepted by them. In the angle between the west and the south walls of the chamber is a little dome borne upon four marble columns; and underneath the dome is a small niche lying horizontally, which was believed in early times to have been the *Cradle of Christ* and referred to under that name by several Arab historians.

In the west wall of the chamber, a door opens into a staircase descending to *Solomon's Stables*. This is a vast subterranean chamber, of roughly rectangular shape, of which the chief feature is the imposing size of the piers. Of these, there are fifteen rows of varying size and height supporting the vaults on which rests the roof. Little is known for certain of the early history of the chamber itself. It dates probably as far back as the construction of Solomon's Temple. According to Josephus, it was in existence and was used as a place of refuge by the Jews at the time of the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus in the year 70 A. D. We also know that this space was used by the Knights Templar as stables,

The existence of the "Temple of the Israelites" was acknowledged by officials of the Islamic religious endowment authority in their publicity materials from the 1920s and 1950s, as in this 1925 Brief Guide to al-Haram al-Sharif.

dent Mahmoud Abbas: "We said to him [Netanyahu], when he claimed the Jews have a historical right dating back to 3000 years B.C.E., we say that the nation of Palestine upon the land of Canaan had a 7,000-year history. This is the truth that must be said: Netanyahu, you are incidental in history. We are the people of history. We are the owners of history."²

According to Palestinian Authority historians, the Palestinian people has been living in Palestine for over seven thousand years.³ Another claim states that Palestinians were in the land since the beginning of creation.⁴ According to Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council of the Palestinian Authority, Palestinians have roots in this land originating from earlier than 7500 B.C.E.⁵ Arab vil-

lages have allegedly existed since the days of the Canaanites.⁶ The "Arab" Canaanites supposedly established ports on the coast of Canaan, known today as Palestine, and Jaffa is said to have been one of the cities whose Canaanite origins later invaders failed to erase.⁷ Overall, the Palestinian people claim to be rooted in the region for thousands of years and long before Israel.⁸

According to this argument, some 6,000 years ago, the Palestinians of Canaan created a great civilization that, like the sun, was producing light and shining it on human beings as the Islamic religious basis of the world.⁹ Palestinian scholars and media have touted the claim that the Palestinian Arab nation has been rooted in its land for thousands of years since the human settlement of the "Arab-Palestinian-Canaanite" city of Jericho—the oldest city in the history of human civilization. In

their claim, the history and heritage of Jericho confirm the Arab-Palestinian-Canaanite narrative concerning the entire Palestinian land, from the sea to the river, and negate the false Zionist narrative. Jericho allegedly proves that the Palestinian nation is the most ancient and earliest of all, whose roots are the most deeply dug into history.¹⁰

Palestinians also declared themselves to have been the center of historical events and peoples found in the Bible in the form of the Edomites, Amorites, Midianites, Amalekites, Ibrahim bin Azar (biblical Abraham), and al-Khadir (Prophet Elijah).¹¹ In the view of the

2 Palestinian al-Fath TV, May 14, 2011.

3 *Al-Ayyam* (Ramallah), Sept. 11, 2006.

4 Palestinian al-Fath TV, July 25, 2004.

5 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* (Ramallah), July 3, 2010.

6 *Ibid.*, Dec. 3, 2010.

7 Palestinian al-Fath TV, repeatedly from 2005-07.

8 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Mar. 17, 2009, Dec. 11, 2011.

9 Palestinian al-Fath TV, Feb. 20, 2011.

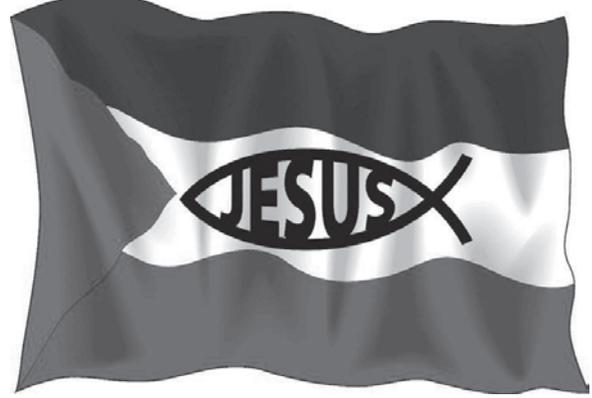
10 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Oct. 21, 2010.

11 *Ibid.*, July 8, 2011.

Palestinian ambassador to India, Adli Sadeq, to ignore the existence of the Palestinian people and its rights reflects a logic that mocks intelligence, culture, and the Bible itself, in which Palestine and its people are mentioned more than 250 times.¹² Of course, the term Palestine appears nowhere in the Bible. The assertion that the Palestinians are descended from the biblical Jebusites, who, according to the Bible, were the original inhabitants of Jerusalem, has also been frequently made.¹³

To claim that Palestinians are the original inhabitants of the Land of Israel not only goes against secular history and scientific knowledge, but it also flies in the face of Islamic religious history. Not only do the Islamic scriptures recognize the unique Jewish claims to the Land of Israel, but there is no reference whatsoever to any Palestinian people dwelling on any land called *Filastin* during any part of Islamic history until the twentieth century. The term *Jund Filastin* was used to describe a military district of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates and had no ethnic or national significance until the twentieth century.

The Qur'an declares that the Jews are the chosen people, exalted among the nations of the world.¹⁴ It clearly declares the Jews (*Bani Israil*) as the only owners of the Land of Israel, which is *al-Ard al-Muqaddasah*; *al-Ard al-Mubarakah*; *Ard Bani Israil* (the sacred land; the blessed land; the land of the People of Israel), and they are not allowed to leave it, for otherwise they will be punished:¹⁵ "It is the promise of God, and God does not go back on his



A Palestinian flag emblazoned with "Jesus." Not even Jesus's origin as a Jew is safe from the Palestinian fabrication of their history. While Jesus was certainly viewed for centuries as a Muslim prophet (along with Abraham and Moses), only recently has he become a model Palestinian shahid, a martyr to their cause.

promise."¹⁶ The Qur'an goes on to acknowledge that the Jewish first and second kingdoms existed but states that they were punished by God.¹⁷ Arab ownership of Palestine is also critically connected to exegesis on the Qur'anic description of Muhammad's Night Journey from Mecca to the "furthest mosque," which is juxtaposed with a verse on the destroyed Temple of the Israelites.¹⁸ The existence of that temple, however, though it had been acknowledged by officials of the Islamic religious endowment authority (*waqf*) in their publicity materials from the 1920s and 1950s,¹⁹ was famously denied by Arafat in an exchange with U.S. president Bill Clinton.²⁰

12 Ibid., Nov. 18, 2005, Dec. 19, 2011.

13 David Wenkel, "Palestinians, Jebusites, and Evangelicals," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2007, pp. 49-56.

14 Qur: al-Baqarah, 2:47; ad-Dukhan, 44:32.

15 Qur: al-Maidah, 5:21; al-A'araf, 7:137; Bani Israil, 17:104.

16 Qur: ar-Rum, 30:6.

17 Qur: Bani Israil, 17:104-7.

18 Ibid., 17: 1, 7.

19 Philip Mattar, "The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem in the Political Struggle over the Western Wall, 1928-1929," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Jan. 1983, pp. 104-18; Muhammad Amin al-Husseini, *Haqa'ik An Qadiyat Filastin* (Cairo: n.p., 1957), pp. 115-9.

20 See Yitzhak Reiter, *Jerusalem and Its Role in Islamic Solidarity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 1-2.

Another Palestinian tactic is aimed at co-opting Christianity. For the PA leaders, Jesus is defined as a Palestinian who preached Islam, thus denying not only Jewish history and Christian legitimacy but also strengthening ancient Pales-

There has never been any historical Palestinian state, nor any indigenous political system and institutions.

stinian history. According to this narrative, Jesus was a Muslim prophet,²¹ like all other Jewish-born figures,²² who was born in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth, and moved to Jerusalem.²³ Therefore, Jesus the messiah is a Palestinian par excellence, the son of Mary the

Palestinian.²⁴ The Virgin Mary, the woman of love and peace, is of the nation of Palestine, whose roots are grounded in the depths of history.²⁵ Jesus is a *shahid*, a holy martyr of Islam, the only Palestinian prophet, and the first Palestinian *shahid* who was tortured in this land.²⁶

DENYING THE JEWISH CONNECTION

In the official Palestinian narrative, the Palestinian people are authentic and indigenous while it is the Israelis who are the foreigners, invented, and sown in a land that is not theirs.²⁷ According to Nabil Alqam, a PA historian, the Israeli state concerns itself with cultural theft and with stealing, distorting, and erasing the Palestinian heritage, which has a historical depth of 4,000 to 5,000 years. The state of Israel at-

tempts to steal Palestinian symbols and to create a fake Israeli identity.²⁸ In his book, *Jerusalem, City of Allah*, Yunes Amr, president of the al-Quds Open University, claims to disprove all Israeli connections and the history of the Jewish presence in Palestine, both historically and linguistically, by exposing the falsification of facts and affirming that the Palestinians are Arab Canaanites indigenous to the land.²⁹

Throughout Palestinian media and education, all Israeli cities and areas are featured as Palestinian in origin, including Haifa, Acre, Ashkelon, Jaffa, Safed, Tiberias, Tel Aviv, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Kiryat Shmonah, and the Negev. These are the “Palestinian homeland” or “occupied Palestine.”³⁰ Instilling these assertions and psychological worldview as facts among youth and in the political arena requires a multilevel process of socialization and indoctrination, beginning with the education system. Reinforcement is constant and all-pervasive: Palestine is continually represented as an area of 27,000 sq km, and an overwhelming Palestinian majority believes this is the truth.³¹

The Palestinians also portray Israelis of today as having no genetic, religious, cultural, or historical connections to the Jews of the past, who are supposed to have disappeared long ago. Issam Sissalem of the Islamic University in Gaza further claims that the biblical Hebrew tribes were in fact Bedouin. As such they were Arab tribes, and there is no connection between them and today’s Israeli Jews, who are the descendants of Eurasian Khazars who converted to Judaism. The original Hebrew tribes were erased and ceased to exist, leaving no traces.³² Likewise, Jarir al-Qudwa, once educational advisor to Arafat, holds that the Israelites of the Bible were not only Arab tribes but were among the

21 Qur: al-Imran, 3:51-2; an-Nisa, 4:171; al-Maidah, 5:111.

22 Qur: al-Baqarah, 2:127-8, 133; al-Imran, 3:84; Yunus, 10:71-2, 84.

23 Palestinian al-Fath TV, Apr. 21, 2006; *al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Mar. 9, Oct. 28, 2006.

24 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Nov. 18, 2005; Palestinian al-Fath TV, May 12, 2009.

25 Palvoice.com, Mar. 17, 2010.

26 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, June 24, Dec. 11, 2000, June 17, 2005, Oct. 28, 2006, Apr. 30, Nov. 18, 2008; Palestinian al-Fath TV, June 9, Dec. 24, 2009.

27 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Dec. 11, 2011.

28 Palestinian al-Fath TV, Oct. 22, 2009.

29 *Al-Ayyam*, Apr. 7, 2009.

30 Palestinian al-Fath TV, Apr. 11, June 14, 24, Sept. 2, Nov. 1, 2011; *al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Jan. 31, June 17, 20, 2011.

31 Palestinian al-Fath TV, May 16, June 11, 25, July 5, Aug. 12, 13, 19, 2010.

32 *Ibid.*, July 25, 2004.

purest. Fathi Buzia, a PA political commentator, argues that Europe, led by Britain, founded Israel, creating and implanting a thieving, fabricated entity upon the Palestinian land, in order to get rid of Jews at home.³³

Israelis are described as religious groups of imposters who were never Jews but part of a Zionist plot to occupy Palestinian lands and steal the Palestinian identity and cultural heritage. This is derided as the greatest crime ever committed against humanity with the aim of the Judaization of Palestine.³⁴ Even the Hebrew language is said to be stolen from Palestinian Aramaic.³⁵ The Israeli state creates “false names” for sites to “erase the Palestinian facts.” It steals everything it lays its hands on “by means of terror,” including music, food, clothing, and folk traditions, even falafel and humus.³⁶ All the territory held by the state of Israel is occupied, and the Palestinians will not compromise on it.³⁷

In the light of this, Palestinian commentators demand that Zionists must acknowledge publicly before the world that Jews have no connection to Palestinian Arab land. Zionist history is nothing more than invention and falsification, constituting a crude form of colonialism.³⁸ Zionists are trying to create a fake history at the expense of a real Palestinian history so as to steal the history and the culture of the Palestinians.³⁹

33 Ibid., June 17, 2009.

34 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Apr. 4, May 26, 2011; Palestinian al-Fath TV, May 23, 2011.

35 Palestinian al-Fath TV, Dec. 7, 2010, Feb. 8, July 15, 2011; *al-Hayat al-Jadida*, May 15, July 1, 2011.

36 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Dec. 16, 2010, Apr. 4, May 16, July 5, Dec. 8, 2011; Palestinian al-Fath TV, Dec. 23, 2010.

37 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Aug. 18, 2011.

38 Ibid., May 27, 2011.

Photo will not display.

Instilling the official Palestinian narrative as fact among youth and in the political arena requires a multilevel process of socialization and indoctrination, beginning with the education system, in which Palestinian children are told repeatedly that all the land is theirs and that any claim of a Jewish connection to it is false.

THE PALESTINIAN “NATION’S” MODERN FOUNDATIONS

The alleged Zionist process of theft and usurpation is, in fact, precisely the official Palestinian policy toward Jewish history.

The paradoxical fact is that Palestinian nationalism effectively owes its creation to Zionism, the Jewish national movement.⁴⁰ Stimulated partially by the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the search for Arab national identities, the main lines of Palestinian nationalism developed during the 1920s and 1930s in reaction to and in contrast with Zionism.

Though Palestinians claim descent from

39 Palestinian al-Fath TV, May 23, 2011.

40 Daniel Pipes, “Mirror Image: How the PLO Mimics Zionism,” *National Interest*, Fall 1994; idem, “Mirror Image: Palestinians Continue to Mimic Zionism,” DanielPipes.org, Jan. 10, 2008.

Canaanites, the fact is that there has never been any historical Palestinian state, nor any indigenous political system and institutions. The Land of Israel witnessed many conquerors over the course of its history, but in the last two thousand years since most of the people of Israel went into exile—albeit not without leaving an uninterrupted presence in the land—it was not the home of any indigenous political entity. Not only has there never been a Palestinian state

There is no Palestinian language, dialect, or culture distinct from those of surrounding Arabs.

and a Palestinian people, but there were no other political entities besides those established by invading forces, such as the crusading statelets or district capitals created by Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs.

Most of the population now known as Palestinian descended from

migrants originating from the surrounding Arab countries and from local Bedouins. Many migrated in waves from the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century. Others were imported by the Ottoman Empire and by the British for infrastructure and agricultural projects, or migrated to the region following Zionist economic success, which produced a staggering population growth.⁴¹ Palestinians are perhaps the newest of all peoples, comprising many scattered groups. In fact, in origin they are more Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, Lebanese, and mainly Bedouin, than Palestinian.

Perhaps the most conspicuous fact regarding the novelty of the Palestinian nation is that when it was within their power, the Arab leaders never seriously sought to create a Palestinian state during the 1940s, and after the establishment of the State of Israel, from 1948 until 1967,

when the West Bank and Gaza were under Egyptian and Jordanian direct rule. Moreover, during that time all Arab leaders referred to the Palestinian issue as a refugee problem. They did not call for the creation of a Palestinian state for the Palestinian nation. Even after the 1967 Six-Day War, United Nations Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, mentions only “refugees,” not even “Arab refugees”—let alone a Palestinian people and a Palestinian state.⁴² Calls in earnest for a Palestinian state did not begin in the United Nations or elsewhere until the late 1960s or the early 1970s.⁴³

Even today, as all Arab states pay lip service to the idea of a Palestinian state, and Palestinian leaders are treated as equals by their Arab counterparts, it is far from clear that a Palestinian state is a real priority. If the Palestinians are a people today, they are indeed a new invention. However, do they deserve a state? Establishment of a Palestinian state would rightly open the floodgates for the creation of numerous states based on both new and old national identities. The Kurds and the Berbers, for example, have lived for centuries in the Middle East. They are distinct and ancient peoples that were not invented in the full light of history, but unfortunately, their existence does not translate automatically into statehood. If it did, such a process of granting statehood to all peoples would begin to unravel the fabric of the modern Arab world. Arab leaders, especially under pressure from the Arab upheavals of 2011 show no enthusiasm for this.

WHAT DO PALESTINIANS WANT?

The important question is what Palestinians really want. What are the Palestinians’ political objectives, and how do they wish to realize them? All their leaders’ declarations and policies clearly show that they have never moderated their primary objective, which is to eliminate

41 See, for example, Efraim Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 2-16; Fred M. Gottheil, “The Smoking Gun: Arab Immigration into Palestine, 1922-1931,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2003, pp. 53-64; Arieh L. Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession, Jewish Land Settlement and the Arabs, 1878-1948* (Edison, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1982), pp. 162-80.

42 U.N. Security Council, “Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967.”

43 See, for example, “10 Point Program,” Palestine National Council, Cairo, June 8, 1974.

the State of Israel. From the *Abadan* (“never”) rhetoric of the 1920s through 1948 to Arafat’s “phased strategy,” adopted at the June 1974 Palestinian National Congress,⁴⁴ Palestinians still lay claim to a land “from the river to the sea.” Palestinians appear unwilling to compromise, to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, or to accept an Israeli state on any territory they call *Filastin*.

It is also evident that Palestinian political evolution is closely tied to Israel’s territorial and political development in two continuous phases. The first emerged after Israel’s independence in 1948 and differentiated the Palestinians as a social group of Arab refugees, also called “Palestine Arabs,” and lacking obvious cultural, social, or political characteristics that distinguished them from their Arab kin, who largely reviled them. The second phase developed after the 1967 Six-Day War; Palestinians then became a political group seeking to develop a national identity during the period of global anti-imperial and anti-colonial ferment. But even as a Palestinian national identity has been developed and marketed, it is overwhelmingly founded on the negation of its rival, namely Jewish and Israeli identity, rather than on positive attributes or real history.

Given this, how have Palestinians been so successful in disseminating their message in the international arena? What brings them the over-



According to Sheikh Ikrima Sabri (center), chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council of the Palestinian Authority, Palestinians have roots in Palestine originating from earlier than 7500 B.C.E. He has frequently warned against “Judaizing” Jerusalem, claiming that there is no evidence of ancient Jewish habitation in the city, in contradiction to earlier acknowledgments by officials of the Islamic religious endowment authority.

whelming political and financial support at the expense of so many nations and other peoples, such as the Kurds and the Berbers, who are denied the chance to establish a state?⁴⁵

Part of the answer is perhaps the Palestinians’ sophisticated ploy of telling all players what they want to hear. In the international arena, the Palestinians emphasize the ideologies of post-colonialism, post-modernism, and multiculturalism. They depict themselves as the victims of colonial Zionism that has stolen their land and express the wish to establish Palestine as a small or even a multicultural state.⁴⁶ In Europe, where there is a high level of guilt and

45 James Minehan, *Nations without States* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), index.

46 Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian legislator, *al-Hayat al-Jadidah*, Dec. 27, 2011; Issa Karake, minister of prisoners’ affairs, *al-Hayat al-Jadidah*, Nov. 24, 2011; Bassam Eid, “Can a Bi-National State Be a Solution to the Middle East Conflict,” Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, Jerusalem, 2009.

44 “Political Program for the Present Stage Drawn up by the 12th PNC, Cairo, June 9, 1974,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer 1974, pp. 224-5.

remorse about its own colonialist past, the Palestinians depict Israel as the last remnant of the bygone European colonialist era and directly blame Europe for the creation of the Jewish state.⁴⁷ Israel is accused of occupying the land that belongs solely to the Palestinian people, and worse, Israel is accused of perpetuating Nazi methods and committing genocide against the Palestinians.⁴⁸ These Palestinian accusations are supported by European intellec-

Only after the Palestinian leadership comes to terms with Israel's legitimacy can one begin discussing the emergence of a Palestinian state.

tuals and leftists who feel remorse about the colonial era and who do not wish to be reminded any further about the Nazi atrocities.

In the United States, where many feel guilt and remorse over historic racism, the Palestinians depict Israel as a racist state, which treats them in the same way as African Americans were

treated.⁴⁹ For human rights organizations, Israel is a cruel occupier that violates all human rights and freedoms of the Palestinians.⁵⁰ In world public opinion, Israel is depicted as an oppressive society that perpetuates systematic exter-

mination and ethnic cleansing.⁵¹ And to Palestinians and other Muslims, the prospect of a Palestinian state is represented as the creation of another proud Arab or pious Muslim state.

The question remains why the international community accepts the Palestinians' claims regarding their fabricated past and the corresponding negation of the Jews. Oil, ignorance, anti-Semitism, and a politically correct unwillingness to offer any challenge to such falsehoods, all play a role. Still, it is difficult to recall a time in modern history when one group of people openly expressed such visceral animosity and hatred and declared its eagerness to eliminate a neighboring state and its people while the international arena ignored and, in fact, enabled and legitimized it.

CONCLUSION

Palestinian Arabs, as opposed to Arabic-speaking residents, have not been in the area west of the Jordan River from the Islamic occupation, from the Ottoman Empire, or even from British rule since 1917. No Palestinian state has ever existed, and so, no Palestinian people has ever been robbed of its land. There is no language or dialect known as Palestinian; there is no Palestinian culture distinct from that of surrounding Arab ones; and there has never been a land known as Palestine governed by Palestinians at any time in history. For these reasons, Palestinians have been driven to fabricate a past by denying and expropriating that of Jews and Israel.

Only after the Palestinian leadership comes to terms with Israel's legitimacy and recognizes it as a Jewish state can one begin discussing the emergence of a Palestinian state that lives in peace beside the State of Israel.



47 Fayez A. Sayegh, "Zionist Colonialism in Palestine," Research Center Palestine Liberation Organization, Beirut, Sept. 1965; Gilbert Achcar, "The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives," Open Democracy, London, Apr. 19, 2010.

48 See, for example, Marwan Bishara, *Palestine/Israel: Peace or Apartheid. Occupation, Terrorism and the Future* (London: Zed Press, 2003); Ziyad Abu Ein, Palestinian Authority deputy minister of prisoners' affairs, interview, Palestinian Fatah TV, Oct. 6, 2011; *al-Hayat al-Jadidah*, Apr. 17, July 5, Oct. 3, 2011.

49 See, for example, *Occupation, Colonialism, Apartheid? A re-assessment of Israel's practices in the occupied Palestinian territories under international law* (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa, 2009); Jamal Dajani, "Israel: Occupation or Apartheid?" *The Huffington Post* (New York), Feb. 5, 2010; Uri Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State* (London: Zed Books, 2002), pp. 55, 61.

50 See, for example, "Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories: The 2011 Report," Amnesty International, New York, accessed Mar. 12, 2012; "Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories, Events of 2009," *World Report 2010*, Human Rights Watch, New York, accessed Mar. 12, 2012.

51 See, for example, *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), Oct. 31, 2009; Inter Press Service (Rome), Mar. 23, 2011; *Asia News* (Bangkok), Mar. 22, 2011.

Fabricating Palestinian History

The Battle over Silwan

by Shaul Bartal

On August 26, 2010, a violent clash broke out between Jewish and Arab residents of Silwan, a predominantly Muslim village outside the southern end of the walled Old City of Jerusalem. The name derives from the biblical “Shiloah”¹ and its subsequently Graecized “Siloam.”²

On the face of it, the sparring that erupted over a gate built illegally by Arab residents³ may seem like a miniature version of the ongoing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians over who controls the Holy Land. But reducing the struggle to a mere real estate dispute misses a critical point in understanding the persistence of the larger conflict. For the battle of Silwan is a microcosm of a larger fight, one in which one side, the Palestinian, seeks to erase the existence of the other—not merely through traditional armed conflict but also by rewriting history.

ERASING THE PAST

The tactic of denying a Jewish past to sites and holy places in the Land of Israel is of relatively recent vintage in the Arab-Israeli conflict but one that has increased dramatically in the past few years.

Jerusalem’s Temple Mount, where both the First and Second Temples stood for some eight hundred years in total, now holds the Dome of the Rock, al-Aqsa Mosque, and the underground Solomon’s Stables mosque. Both in 1925 and again in 1950, Palestine’s Supreme Muslim Council unequivocally recognized the Jewish connection to the Haram al-Sharif (the Noble Sanctuary; i.e., Temple Mount), describing it as a holy site for Jews in its self-published *A Brief Guide to al-Haram al-Sharif*:

Its identity with the site of Solomon’s Temple

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is beyond dispute. This, too, is the spot, according to universal belief, on which “David built there an altar unto the Lord.”⁴

By the mid 1950s, this admission had been expunged, and by 2001, the chief Muslim cleric of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the Jerusalem mufti Ikrima Sabri, was able to state,

There is not [even] the smallest indication of the existence of a Jewish temple on this place in the past. In the whole city, there is not even a single stone indicating Jewish history. Our [Muslim] right, on the other hand, is very clear. This place belongs to us for 1,500 years.⁵

The Western Wall, until recently the only visible remnant of the Temple complex and the place at which Jews have prayed for millennia, has been

1 Isa 8:6; Neh 3:15.

2 John 9:7, 11.

3 *The Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 27, 2010.

4 “A Brief Guide to Haram al-Sharif,” Supreme Moslem Council, Jerusalem, 1925.

5 *Die Welt* (Hamburg), Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Washington, D.C., trans., Special Dispatch, no. 182, Jan. 26, 2001.

similarly transformed. Muslims have renamed it the Wall of al-Buraq after the tethering place of the horse on which the prophet Muhammad is reputed to have taken his night flight to Jerusalem.⁶ Palestinians continue to deny a Jewish connection despite the likelihood that the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66) reaffirmed Jewish rights to worship at the wall,⁷ or that three

centuries later, the Muslim ruler Ibrahim Pasha (son of Egypt's viceroy Muhammad Ali) issued a decree regarding the site that allowed Jews "to pay visits to it as of old."⁸

Even the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem has come under assault. For centuries a pilgrimage site, especially for barren Jewish women, it is mentioned

by the twelfth century Arab historian, al-Idrisi, and became a site of veneration for Muslims as well, known as "Kubat Rahil." In 1615, Jews were given exclusive rights to the tomb by their Muslim ruler, and again, in 1830, the Ottomans recognized the legal rights of the Jews to the site. Sir Moses Montefiore was permitted to purchase the site in 1841, at which time he restored the tomb and added a small prayer hall for Muslims.⁹ Since 1996, however, Palestinians have taken to calling it the "Bilal Bin Rabah Mosque" claiming it as the burial place of Muhammad's first servant¹⁰ although there are centuries-old sites in Damascus¹¹ and Jordan that

have long-made that claim. In 2010, the heavily politicized organization, UNESCO, joined the Muslim deniers and demanded that Israel remove the grave from its National Heritage List and cede control of it to the Palestinians.¹²

The ultimate goal of the Palestinians and their allies is to advance the idea that Jerusalem in general, and neighborhoods like Silwan in particular, have no Jewish ties. Archeological remnants found in Jerusalem are thus presented as either Canaanite or Muslim. As argued by Nazami Amin al-Ju'beh, chair of Bir Zeit University's history department,

We do not agree with the biblical version, according to which there was a tremendous kingdom or the capital of a tremendous kingdom. No castle has been uncovered and no remnants have been found of the First Temple, the one that was supposedly built in the period of Solomon that would testify to this size ... The Hebrews reached Jerusalem in the first century B.C.E. and their sovereignty over Jerusalem was only for a short time ... Up until today, it is impossible to point to any characteristics in Jerusalem that can be attributed historically to this period. There is no historical characteristic that is related in this manner to a Hebrew culture.¹³

Arab spokespersons from across the political spectrum and from many different fields work enthusiastically to negate every archeological claim that recognizes a link to the Jewish people from the First or Second Temple periods. This sentiment is echoed across the Palestinian spectrum, including popular outlets on television and in newspapers. For example, Yunes Amr, president of al-Quds Open University, pointed out the inaccuracy of the widespread view that the Palestinians originated with a group of people who emigrated from the Greek Isles and settled in Palestine, claiming instead that the Palestin-

12 "The Two Palestinian Sites of al-Haram al-Ibrahimi/Tomb of the Patriarchs in al-Khalil/Hebron and the Bilal Bin Rabah Mosque/Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem," 184 EX/37, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, Mar. 19, 2010.

13 Fatah TV, Feb. 27, 2009.

The Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent affirmed Jewish rights to worship at the Western Wall in the 16th century.

6 See Daniel Pipes, "If I Forget Thee: Does Jerusalem Really Matter to Islam?" *The New Republic*, Apr. 28, 1997.

7 Rivka Gonen, *Contested Holiness* (Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 2003), pp. 135-7.

8 Eliel Löfgren, Charles Barde, and J. Van Kempen, "Report of the Commission appointed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations, to determine the rights and claims of Moslems and Jews in connection with the Western or Wailing Wall at Jerusalem," Dec. 1930, UNISPAL doc A/7057-S/8427, Feb. 23, 1968.

9 *YNet News* (Tel Aviv), Nov. 3, 2010.

10 Nadav Shragai, "Rachel's Tomb, a Jewish Holy Place, Was Never a Mosque," *The Jerusalem Center for Public and State Affairs*, Nov.-Dec. 2010.

11 "Tomb of Bilal," *IslamicLandmarks.com*, accessed Mar. 12, 2012.

ians are Arab Canaanites indigenous to this land.¹⁴

On another occasion, he stated

They dug the Western Wall tunnel ... and at the heart of the tunnel, they inaugurated a new synagogue, the closest—according to their illusion—to the holy of holies of the alleged temple.¹⁵

Yasser Arafat argued at the Camp David negotiations in July 2000 that the Jewish temple was not on the Temple Mount, claiming that the Qur'an proved that the temple was not even in Palestine.¹⁶

This method of erasing the Jews from Jerusalem is very popular in Palestinian academia,¹⁷ with PA officials,¹⁸ and religious leaders¹⁹—and has infected an entire generation of Muslims, both inside and outside the state of Israel.

SILWAN AND THE CITY OF DAVID

Despite these strident falsifications, there is no doubt that the Jewish people were established in Palestine long before the land bore

14 *Al-Ayyam* (Ramallah), Apr. 7, 2009.

15 Palestinian Authority TV, May 1, 2009.

16 Sari Nusseibeh and Anthony David, *Hayo Hayta Aretz* (Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishing House, 2008), p. 312.

17 Marwan Abu Khalaf, Archaeological Center of al-Quds University, Jerusalem, interview, Palestinian Fatah TV, Feb. 27, 2009; Yonas Amar, Open al-Quds University, interview, *al-Ayyam*, Apr. 7, 2009; Hasan Sana-Allah, Center for Modern Research, Jerusalem, *al-Ayyam*, Apr. 28, 2009.

18 Mahmoud al-Habash, Palestinian Authority agricultural minister, Palestinian Fatah TV, Apr. 16, 2009.

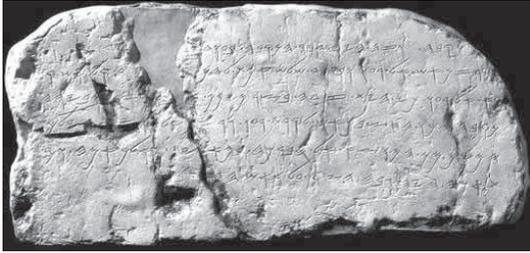
19 Tayseer Rajab al-Tamimi, chairman, High Council of the Shari'a Court, *al-Hayat al-Jadida*, Mar. 2, 17, 2009.



Notwithstanding Palestinian denials of the Jewish roots of Silwan, they are much in evidence to the casual observer as can be seen here where Arab homes are literally built atop ancient Jewish tombs carved into the limestone hillside.

that name. In fact, the town of Silwan is, to some degree, the epicenter of that long history, perhaps explaining the ferocity of the current uproar.

Many people incorrectly assume that what is today termed the “Old City” of Jerusalem is identical to the city taken by King David from the Jebusites (a Canaanite tribe) sometime in the eleventh century B.C.E. and subsequently turned into the capital of the united Israelite kingdom. Actually, there is abundant and growing evidence that the “City of David” was outside the present walls of Jerusalem, built on a rocky promontory that is now part of the village of Silwan. Excavations by European archeologists in the nineteenth century, and accelerating since the Israeli recapture of Jerusalem in 1967, have revealed ancient and massive structures that were the original Jerusalem. Recent finds of seals and bullae (pieces of clay stamped with seal impressions) with Hebrew text, including at least two with the names of royal officials mentioned in the book of Jeremiah, have led archeologist Eilat Mazar to argue that parts of the site were the palaces of



The "Hezekiah inscription" from the Siloam tunnel testifies to the antiquity of Silwan and its Jewish roots. The carving commemorates the joining of two sides of a tunnel that helped bring water to Jerusalem and is mentioned in II Kings and II Chronicles.

the Davidic and Judean kings.²⁰

Both the City of David and the previous Jebusite stronghold had been watered by the nearby spring of Gihon, still a reliable source of water for the area. Even in ancient times, a channel had been cut to a man-made pool in order to store water during periods of drought; this was the "Shelah (sent) Pool to the King's Garden" mentioned in Nehemiah, 3, 15. In response to the threat of siege by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, an older, open-air aqueduct was plugged and a tunnel carved through the bedrock from the spring to the pool by King Hezekiah (c. 715-686 B.C.E.).²¹ A Hebrew inscription testifying to this ancient engineering marvel was discovered in the late nineteenth century and is now housed in the Istanbul Museum.²² The central area of the modern town of Silwan appears to have been built atop the nearby necropolis of Judea's elite as attested to by roughly fifty tombs found in the area.

After the destruction of the First Temple in

586 B.C.E. and the return of the Judean exiles, the city grew significantly but the renamed Siloam and its environs were still integrally connected to it. Massive steps leading up to the Second Temple from the Shiloah (Siloam, Silwan), the powerful spring outside the city walls, have been excavated. Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, mentions Siloam frequently, making a connection between the might of the spring and the destruction of the Second Temple. According to him, before the coming of Titus, the waters of the Shiloah and the rest of the springs close to the city decreased.

But, at the time of Titus, the spring provided enough water to quench the thirst of the enemies of the Jews. The same phenomenon occurred before the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians, and Josephus used it in his attempt to convince the residents of Jerusalem to surrender.²³

The story of Jesus and the blind man²⁴ made the Pool of Siloam a pilgrimage site in the Byzantine period, and the Gihon spring was at some point renamed the "Fountain of the Virgin." The Church of Siloam as well as the City of David/Wadi Hilweh section were inside Jerusalem's walls during the Byzantine period. Meanwhile, hermits and monks took over the tombs outside the walls and lived there, adding an additional layer of significance to the site for Christians. Remains of a church dating to the fifth century C.E. were uncovered at the City of David excavations by modern archeologists.²⁵ A map from 1917 still shows a church close to the pool, a structure that was likely converted into the so-called Mosque of the Spring that was the subject of the fight mentioned earlier.

20 *The New York Times*, Aug. 5, 2005.

21 II Kgs 20, 20; 2 Chron. 32, 3-4.

22 Eyal Davidson, *Yerushalaim Mikol Makom* (Petach Tikva: Datiyur Publisher, 2003), pp. 30-1; Alon De Groot, "Jerusalem Waterfalls in the Days of the First Temple," *Aidan*, Jerusalem, 15, 1991, pp. 124-34; Roni Reich and Ali Shukrun, "The New Excavations in the City of David," in Avraham Faust and Eyal Baruch, eds., *New Development in Jerusalem Studies, the Third Congress* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2008), pp. 3-8.

23 Yosef ben Matityahu (Josephus Titus Flavius), *Toldot Milhemet Ha-Yehudim Im Ha-Romaim* (Tel-Aviv: Modan Publishing House, 1996), book 5, p. 298.

24 John 9:7, 11.

25 "City of David," Conservation Dept., Israel Authorities Antiquities, Jerusalem, accessed Mar. 12, 2012.

In 638 C.E., Muslim armies under Umar ibn al-Khattab captured Jerusalem. While no significant remains dating to the early Islamic period have been discovered in the City of David excavations, the area appears to have become a Muslim township. Though present-day locals spin tales of the village having been established as “Khan Silowna” by this conquering caliph,²⁶ the earliest reference by a Muslim author seems to be from Muhammad al-Muqaddasi’s *Ahsan at-Taqasim fi Ma’rifat al-Aqalim* (The Best Ways to Know Geographical Places). Muqaddasi (945-1000 C.E.), a Jerusalemite, wrote:

The village of Sulwan is a place on the outskirts of the city. Below the village is the Ain Sulwan [Spring of Siloam], of fairly good water, which irrigates the large gardens which were given in bequest [*waqf*] by the caliph Othman ibn Affan for the poor of the city. Lower down than this, again, is Job’s Well [Bir Ayyub]. It is said that on the Night of Arafat the water of the holy well Zamzam, at Makkah [Mecca], comes underground to the water of the Spring [of Siloam]. The people hold a festival here on that evening.²⁷

Othman (or Uthman) ibn Affan (579-656 C.E.) succeeded Umar as the third of the “rightly-guided caliphs,” a term bestowed by Sunni Muslims on the immediate successors to Muhammad indicating a veneration of their actions and statements, which has tremendous significance to the modern-day conflict as does the legend recorded by Muqaddasi.

Silwan’s fortunes seesawed over time. The Muslim biographer and geographer, Yaqut al-Hamawi, wrote in 1225 that “in his day there was a considerable suburb of the city at Sulwan and

gardens,”²⁸ but less than a century later, the author of the *Marasid*, a geographical dictionary written around 1300 C.E., stated that “the gardens had all disappeared, that the water of Sulwan was no longer sweet, and that the buildings were all in ruin.”²⁹

Closer to modern times, Israeli geographer Menashe Harel relates that in the mid-1850s, the villagers of Silwan were paid £100 annually by Jerusalem’s Jews in an effort to prevent the desecration of nearby graves on the Mount of Olives.³⁰ This fraught relationship between the two communities took a new turn late in the century with the arrival of Yemenite Jews into the town. Inspired by a messianic desire to return to the land of their forefathers, between 1881 and 1882, a group of penniless Yemenite Jews came to Jerusalem. The long-time Jewish inhabitants of the city initially rejected their coreligionists but eventually built homes for them in the Silwan area, creating a neighborhood that became known as *Kfar Hashiloah* (Shiloah Village) and the “Yemenite Village.”³¹

During the pogroms of 1921 and 1929, these homes were attacked by Arab neighbors, and in 1939, at the end of the three-year Great Revolt against the British mandatory authorities, the Yemenite Jews of Silwan were evacuated, their homes soon occupied without compensation by the neighboring villagers. Thus, both the area of the City of David and the neighboring town of Silwan had no Jewish residents until 1967.

No significant remains dating to the early Islamic period have been discovered in the City of David excavations.

26 Jeffrey Yas, “(Re)designing the City of David: Landscape, Narrative and Archaeology in Silwan,” *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Winter 2000.

27 Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Muqaddasi, *Ahsan at-Taqasim fi Ma’rifat al-Aqalim* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 171; Guy le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500* (London: Alexander P. Watt for the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890), p. 221.

28 Yakut Ibn Abdullah ar-Rumi al-Hamawi, *Mu’jam al-Buldan* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1959), vol. 3, pp. 125, 761; Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, p. 221.

29 Safi ad-Din Abd al-Mu’min Abd al-Haqq al-Baghdadi, *Marasid al-Ittila ala Asma al-Amkina wa al-Biqa* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifa, 1954), vol. 2, p. 296; Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, p. 222.

30 Menashe Harel, *Golden Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House Ltd., 2004), p. 244.

31 Tamar Wisemon, “Streetwise: Yemenite Steps,” *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, Feb. 28, 2008.

THE KING'S GARDEN

The City of David and the bulk of the village of Silwan are built on two opposing slopes of the Judean hills through which runs the Kidron Valley, named after the stream or wadi that flows through it to the Dead Sea; the Gihon spring essentially derives its water from the same source. As a result, this valley has since antiquity been more lush and better able to sustain agriculture than the limestone hills of the region. Known as “the King’s Garden” in the Bible,³² it is said to be the source of inspiration for verses in Ecclesiastes (“I made me gardens and parks, and I planted in them trees of all kinds of fruit.”³³) and the Song of Songs, both traditionally ascribed to David’s heir, King Solomon.

Regardless of who originally cultivated the area (and it is likely that the pre-Israelite Jebusites also took advantage of its verdure), under Ottoman, British, Jordanian, and Israeli control, the area was effectively left green. Since Israel reunited the eastern and western halves of the city, and as Jerusalem has grown in population,

Muslim residents have moved illegally into “the King’s Garden” and practically erased its lush character.

On March 2, 2010, the Jerusalem Development Authority (JDA), a joint government-municipal corporation under the authority of the Minister of Finance, the Minister for Jerusalem Affairs, and the city’s

mayor, presented a plan to rehabilitate the King’s Garden and provide needed infrastructure and other amenities to central Silwan. According to the JDA’s promotional brochure,

The neighborhood of Silwan lacks adequate planning. This led to a situation in which the neighborhood lacks infrastructure on all levels: educational facilities, roads, sidewalks, community facilities, open recreational spaces, electricity, water, parking, and more ... Under Ottoman, British, Jordanian, and Israeli control, the [King’s Garden] area was always zoned and preserved as a park. In the past fifty years, about 700 Muslim residents have moved into the area illegally. Because current zoning still defines the area as a park, there is a similar lack of adequate infrastructure in the King’s Garden.³⁴

The pamphlet continues:

up until 1967, the garden contained only four structures on its southern side. However, the laying of sewage pipes triggered the development of massive, illegal construction in the area. Currently, there are eighty-eight structures inside the garden area, all of which were built without building permits on an area that had been preserved as a garden [for] thousands of years.

The Silwan project would extend the boundaries of the City of David National Park,³⁵ and according to the project’s plans, twenty-two out of eighty-eight illegally built houses are slated for destruction. Compensation would be given to the evicted families plus additional aid to help them legally rebuild their homes elsewhere in Silwan.³⁶ The rest of the existing houses in the area would be approved retroactively and legal proceedings against them dropped.

Thus, a park catering to both residents and tourists would be built, providing an economic stimulus for the entire neighborhood. Additionally, according to the planners,

Currently, no public center serves the resi-

If a caliph dedicated Silwan as a Muslim waqf, no Muslim can change that fact without being charged as an unbeliever.

32 II Kgs 25:4; Jer. 52:7; Neh 3:15.

33 Eccles 2:5.

34 “A Comprehensive Plan for Silwan: Development for Residents, Visitors and Tourists,” Jerusalem Development Authority, p. 6, accessed Mar. 12, 2012.

35 “Launch of the King’s Garden Plan,” The Jerusalem Development Authority and the City of Jerusalem, Mar. 2, 2010.

36 *Ha’aretz* (Tel Aviv), June 30, 2010.

dents of Silwan or surrounding villages such as Abu Tor and Ras el-Amood with after-school programs, a library, senior citizen programs, kindergartens, infant care center, or a public swimming pool. The residents lack access to these vital services provided to residents in other parts of the city.

The SCC [Silwan Community Center] will also focus on providing for the children of Silwan with a brand new infant care center ... a day care center, and seven classrooms for extracurricular programming. ...

For the growing senior citizen population, the SCC will have a special wing devoted to senior citizen programming ... The roof of the SCC will have several public sports courts and a promenade looking out toward the Old City and Temple Mount.³⁷

This planned project has stirred up Islamic and Palestinian organizations working in Jerusalem, along with other groups that have come out against this move by the Israeli authorities. The mayor's office sought to reach compromises with area residents including offering those Arabs whose houses are to be demolished first crack at operating tourist-related business in the park.³⁸ Despite this, under pressure from the Obama administration and at the urging of Prime Minister Netanyahu, Jerusalem mayor Nir Barkat soon announced that he would delay the plan's implementation.

The complaints against the project, however, include not only legitimate grievances about the destruction of (illegally built) homes and the removal of the residents to another area. Coupled with these criticisms are objections against the biblical and historical narrative that stands at the foundation of the plan as well as a religious imperative with no room for compromise.



When this picture was taken in 1901, Silwan was a small village on the eastern slopes facing Jerusalem. The King's Garden was still verdant and essentially uninhabited. In the past fifty years, about 700 Muslim residents have moved into the area illegally.

“MOST IMPORTANT PLACE IN AL-QUDS”

Notwithstanding Mayor Barkat's temporary suspension, Palestinian opponents continued their fight against the plan. Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Foundation for Development—a nonprofit organization partnering with leaders from the Israeli Arab Islamic Movement such as Sheikh Raed Salah and al-Bustan Neighborhood Committee—distributed an alternate community-based plan a month later in which not a single home would be evacuated or destroyed.³⁹

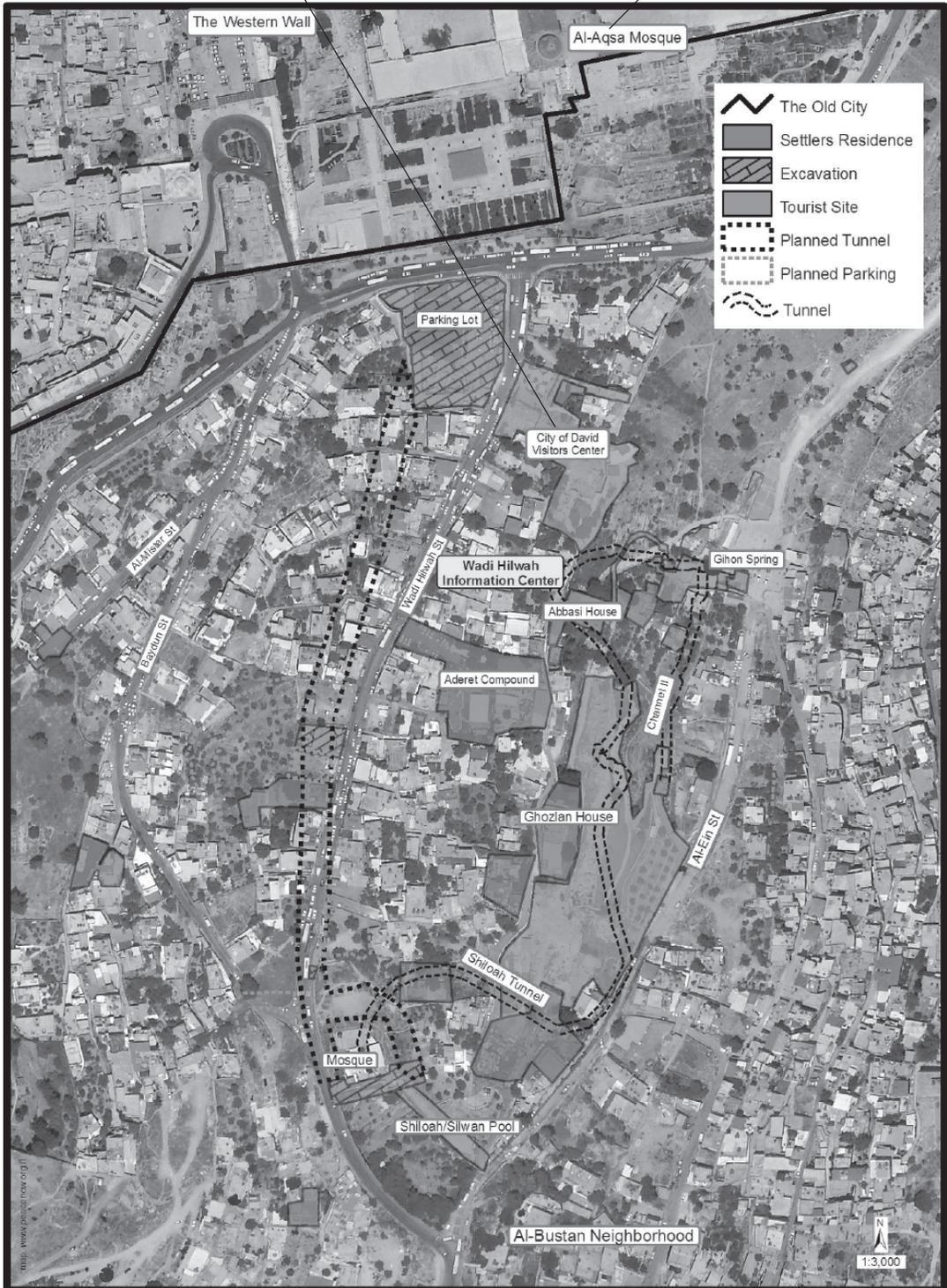
While acknowledging that the houses in the King's Garden/al-Bustan neighborhood were built illegally, the authors upped the ante by claiming that the garden's residents were actually refugees from the 1948 war who had origi-

37 “A Comprehensive Plan for Silwan, p. 20.
38 *Ha'aretz*, Mar. 2, 2010.

39 *Silwan ... Siraa Bekaa Wawagud*, al-Quds Foundation for Development and the al-Bustan Neighborhood Committee, Silwan, Jerusalem, Apr. 2010, pp. 1-3, 7-19.

City of David

Al-Aqsa Mosque



The City of David and the bulk of the village of Silwan are built on two opposing slopes of the Judean hills through which runs the Kidron Valley, named after the stream or wadi that flows through it to the Dead Sea. As this map shows, the City of David is a considerable distance from al-Aqsa Mosque.

nally been forced to move to the Ma'aleh Adumim area, west of Jerusalem. There they lived until they were forced to leave in 1967 to make way for the building of the city of Ma'aleh Adumim. They then settled in the Silwan area, and over the years, built their homes in al-Bustan without permission from the authorities. If the King's Garden plan were to move forward, this would be, in their telling, their third expulsion.

Setting aside questions of historicity of that claim, the pamphlet goes on to detail the Palestinian narrative of the place in question. Under the subhead "Silwan Is the Most Important Place in Al-Quds which Was Dedicated by the Third Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, the Righteous," it maintains that

In the city is a well-known spring known as "Silwan's Fountain" which is connected to the history of the city of Jerusalem. This water source was already established during the Canaanite period. The water was transported in sluices that were built by the Jebusites [the original builders of Jerusalem], and today there still exist archaeological remains showing the existence [of this water system] ... The spring waters were the water supply for the residents of the city during the Canaanite period. Canaanite Jerusalem was dependent on the spring waters up until the Byzantine period. During Herod's reign, he built a portion of the spring's water pool, and this portion of the spring's waters was enough for him. During the early Islamic period, the Muslims took care of Silwan's Fountain and the Third Righteous Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, expanded the spring and renewed it and dedicated Islamic dervishes to it in the temple. From this period, Silwan's Fountain and the land around was defined as belonging to the Islamic *waqf*.⁴⁰

With a slight nod to the universally reviled King Herod (74-3, 4 B.C.E.), the committee expunges all other ties Silwan has to Jewish history but significantly stresses the connection between the village, the *waqf*, and Caliph Uthman.

The word *waqf* used above has two inter-

connected meanings. It is both a Muslim religious endowment and a body that manages and oversees the endowment. The basic regulations governing *waqf* trusts are interpreted by Shari'a law, but in essence, *waqf* property is absolutely permanent, and once established, the contract cannot be altered or the property sold. Furthermore, by linking the establishment of Silwan as *waqf* to Uthman, its existence as an everlasting Muslim inheritance is made all the more inviolable. Uthman as well as the three other Righteous Caliphs were companions of Muhammad, so close to him in Muslim telling that their deeds and words are to be emulated almost as much as Muhammad's himself. If Caliph Uthman dedicated Silwan as a Muslim *waqf*, no Muslim can change that fact without being charged as an unbeliever.⁴¹

This theme is expanded upon in the pamphlet when the authors write,

During the second conquest of Jerusalem, [during the period of Salah ad-Din (Saladin)] Yusuf ibn Ayyub [i.e., Saladin] came and dedicated the village inside of which was the Spring to *madrassa* [Islamic religious school] as-Salihyya, and he returned and renewed the village and the spring as a whole Islamic *waqf*. This area was part of the Islamic *waqf* for the thousands of years that passed since the conquering of Salah ad-Din. The spring is still under the supervision of the *waqf* and is a source of income for the *waqf*.

The listing of the area as *waqf* was accepted only at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The listing includes all of the income from every part of the land that is found in Silwan including the spring that is found in the village.⁴²

**Al-Quds
Foundation has
alleged an Israeli
plot to replace
al-Aqsa Mosque
with a third
temple.**

41 Ephraim Herrera and Gideon Kressel, *Jihad Ben Halacha le-Maase* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House and Kinneret Zmora Bitan, Dvir Publishing House, 2009), pp. 105-7.

42 *Silwan ... Siraa Bekaa Wawagud*, p. 5.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

It is only fitting that the figure of Saladin is brought forward to justify the belief in eternal Islamic ownership of Silwan, despite there being no evidence in medieval Arab writings to attest to the tale. As the ruler who defeated the Crusaders and returned Jerusalem to Muslim control, who better to return Silwan as *waqf* to fellow Muslims?

“JUDAIZATION” OF JERUSALEM

Admitting that Silwan’s designation as *waqf* may actually be a late episode in the village’s history does not diminish the belief in Silwan’s holiness professed by these and others. In fact, it goes hand-in-hand with another more pernicious myth: the supposed Jewish design to “Judaize the blessed city of Jerusalem” with a view to transforming it into “a Jewish Talmudic Jerusalem”:

According to one Palestinian group, Silwan is the doorway through which the settlers are trying to Judaize Jerusalem.

West Jerusalem’s municipality is trying to lead with its plan to prove the existing reality according to the theories that appear in the Talmudic literature despite the fact that we are talking about Islamic land and Arab holy land. In order to realize that goal, the city has cre-

ated and inaugurated a Visitors Center in the City of David, which is a part of the plan for the City of David. That is how the hikes through the Silwan Fountain tunnel began, hikes which end up at the pool of the Silwan Fountain close to Silwan’s Fountain mosque. During the same hike, visitors are accompanied by Israeli guides who present the legend of the City of David and the establishment of the First and Second Temples and the efforts to build [today] the Third Temple in the place of the blessed al-Aqsa Mosque.⁴³

Thus alongside the notions that Jews fabri-

cate their history and that Silwan and its environs are a sacred *waqf*, opponents create a conspiracy of Talmudic Judaization of the city whose goal is the eradication of al-Aqsa Mosque to be replaced by a third temple. The trope of a perverted Talmudic Judaism is a favored one used by anti-Semites throughout the ages and most recently picked up and amplified by Muslim and Arab opponents of the Jewish state.⁴⁴

In their fixation on the Judaization of Jerusalem, the pamphleteers echo a 2006 piece in *Sawt al-Haq wa-l-Huiriya* (Voice of Truth and Freedom) the journal of the Islamic Movement centered in Umm al-Fahm and led by Raed Salah, where the plan to Judaize Silwan is discussed in great detail. The Islamic Movement, a local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, is at the forefront of organizing Israeli Arabs to identify themselves strictly as Palestinians with Salah leading the campaign to “defend” Jerusalem and “liberate” it from Israeli “occupation.”⁴⁵

The other image used by al-Quds Foundation is the alleged Israeli plot to replace al-Aqsa Mosque with a third temple—despite the fact that the Israeli authorities have consistently restricted the movement of non-Muslims on the Temple Mount to the point where they have been accused of discrimination against Jews and Christians.⁴⁶

A pamphlet from the group Islamic Jihad-Beit al-Makdas uses melodramatic language to further illustrate the evil intents of the Jews, accusing Zionists of attacking Jerusalem, Silwan—“the gateway to al-Aqsa Mosque,” and al-Aqsa Mosque itself, which is “the rock of grace of Jerusalem and the crown of the whole Islamic nation.”

44 Robert S. Wistrich, “Muslim Anti-Semitism: A Clear and Present Danger,” The American Jewish Committee, 2002; al-Jami’a al-Islamiya, *al-Mufawadat min Nuzur Islami* (n.p.), pp. 20-1; Muhammad Musbah Hamdan, *al-Ishti’mar wa-l-Sahyunia al-Alamia* (Sidon: Dar al-Kutba al-Asriya, 1967), pp. 94-112.

45 See Raphael Israeli, “The Islamic Movement in Israel,” *Jerusalem Letter*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Oct. 15, 1999; L. Barkan, “The Islamic Movement in Israel: Switching Focus from Jerusalem to the Palestinian Cause,” Inquiry & Analysis Series, report no. 628, Middle East Media Research Institute, Washington, D.C., July 30, 2010.

46 *Arutz Sheva* (Beit El and Petah Tikva), Feb. 16, 2012.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

The authors thank those “who protect al-Aqsa and its gates and the residents of the village of Silwan” and informs them that the way is clear “to the temple, from Silwan, the aristocratic, the symbol of steadfastness at the gates of al-Aqsa Mosque.” The authors ask “Would you like to be a guard [on watch] at the blessed al-Aqsa and nothing will pass by you?” and warn, “Do not let into your homes the flocks of the settlers.”⁴⁷

According to this line of thought, Silwan becomes the doorway through which the settlers are trying to pass to Judaize Jerusalem and at the same time, enter the Temple Mount in order to dismantle al-Aqsa and rebuild the temple. The steps that are being carried out, according to Islamic spokespersons, will lead to a third *intifada*.⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

The Palestinian Arab assault on the Jewish connection to Jerusalem continues apace aided and abetted not only by radical Islamists or angry Silwanites but by fellow travelers in the media and in academia, including Israeli Jews.

Consider the tours carried out by Emek Shaveh, an Israeli nonprofit organization, and Palestinian residents of Silwan with a view to rebuffing the “political archaeology of the Jews” and to prove the area’s “true” archaeological significance.⁴⁹ Emek Shaveh’s founder Yonathan

Mizrachi, who has voluntarily left his job at Israel’s Antiquity Authority, spares no effort to downplay the Jewish biblical history of the area. As he put it: “After three hours on [an Israeli-organized] tour, you are convinced that you are at a totally Jewish site where evidence of Canaanite, Byzantine, and Muslim, and, of course, Palestinian [civilizations] are pushed aside. Jerusalem has 4,000 years of history. They only focus on the marvelous stories of King Solomon, David, and Hezekiyah, of which, by the way, they haven’t found any archaeological evidence that ties them to the place.”⁵⁰

Mizrachi’s website contains an essay of over 5,000 words—“Archaeology in Silwan”—which transforms archaeology into a handmaiden of social science pieties and criticizes even the use of the phrase City of David as a manifestation of settler objectives. In doing so, he also manages to rewrite history, claiming falsely that “during the main periods of prosperity under the kingdom of Judah ... the cultural identity of the town and its inhabitants was contested.”⁵¹

Sadly, the battle over Silwan (and for that matter the wider Palestinian-Israeli conflict) is likely to continue as long as Palestinian Arabs and their brethren refuse to recognize that another people, the Jews, have a claim to the Land of Israel.

The Palestinian Arab assault on the Jewish connection to Jerusalem is abetted by some Israeli Jews.

47 “Al-Hay’a al-Islamiya al-Masiihiya lenasra al-Quds wa-al-Maqdassat,” Islamic Jihad-Bait al-Makdas, Dec. 2009, p. 8.

48 See “Sarakha Tahdhir min Mukhatat ‘Kedem Yerushalaim’ Urshalim Awalan,” al-Aqsa Foundation for Waqf and Heritage ad; Ibrahim Abu Jaber, “Mashari Ta’hid Madinat al-Quds wa-Fars Ishti’al Intifada Thalitha,” Modern Learning Center ad, Mar. 4, 2010.

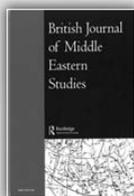
49 “About Silwanic,” Wadi Hilweh Information Center, Jerusalem, accessed Mar. 29, 2012.

50 Aviv Lavi, “Ha-Politika shel Nikbat Ha-Shiloha’h,” NRG (*Maariv* news website, Tel Aviv), July 27, 2009; Idan Landu, “Me-Nishul Muftrat le-Militsiot Muftratot,” Haokets website, Nov. 25, 2010.

51 Yonathan Mizrachi, “Where Is King David’s Garden?” Emek Shaveh, Jerusalem, accessed Mar. 29, 2012.



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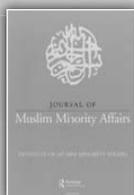
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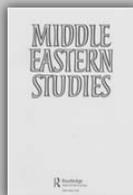
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Hindu vs. Muslim Honor Killings

by Phyllis Chesler and Nathan Bloom

Although the overwhelming majority of honor killings worldwide occur within Muslim communities,¹ one would not know this by reading the mainstream media. Fearful of being labeled “Islamophobic,” the American press has given only glancing attention to the widespread, honor-related ritual murder of Muslim women in the Middle East and South Asia while treating periodic honor killings among Muslim immigrants in the West as ordinary domestic abuse cases.

Over the last few years, however, the media has published a flurry of articles about Hindu honor killings in India, the only non-Muslim-majority country where these murders are still rampant.² Apologists for Muslim culture and civilization rushed to herald the upsurge in Hindu (and Sikh) honor killings as evidence that the practice is “a universal problem, not an Islamic issue.”³

While India is indeed a striking exception to Islam’s near monopoly on contemporary honor killings, the following preliminary statistical survey shows Hindu honor killings in India to be different in form and commission from those of Muslims in neighboring Pakistan. Though no less gruesome, the Hindu honor killings seem largely confined to the north of India and are perpetuated by sociocultural factors largely specific to India. The millions of Indian Hindus who have immigrated to the West do not bring the practice along with them.

The recent spike of honor killings in India is likely the product of a clash between traditional and modern values, intensified by high economic growth and increasing social mobility. The spike may also reflect growing media coverage of this crime. The democratically elected government of India has taken important, if long overdue, steps to combat the practice of honor killing, and some progress has been made.

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1 Phyllis Chesler, “Worldwide Trends in Honor Killings,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2010, pp. 3-11.

2 For example, see *The New York Times*, July 9, 2010, June 4, 2011; *The Washington Post*, Nov. 22, 2008.

3 John L. Esposito, “Honor Killing: Is Violence against Women a Universal Problem, Not an Islamic Issue?” *The Huffington Post*, Sept. 4, 2010.



According to Hindu religious law and tradition, marrying or having sexual relations with a member of a different caste is strictly forbidden as is romantic involvement with someone from the same sub-caste. Local caste-based councils known as khap panchayats often prescribe punishments or even mandate the murder of those who violate their laws. The farmer seen here (right) sought police protection after the local khap vandalized his farmland for refusing to annul his son's marriage to a "forbidden" woman.

Not so in Pakistan where officials at all levels of government are either unable or unwilling to cope with honor killings. For Pakistan and many other Muslim countries, which have yet to experience the social stresses of rapid modernization or build the kind of political institutions that can eradicate a practice so deeply rooted in traditional beliefs—especially as Islamists now dominate—the worst may be yet to come.

THE SOCIAL MILIEU

Honor killing is the premeditated murder of a relative (usually a young woman) who has allegedly impugned the honor of her family. It tends to predominate in societies where individual rights are circumscribed by communal solidarities, patriarchal authority structures, and intolerant religious and tribal beliefs. Under such conditions, control over marriage and reproduction is critical to the socioeconomic status of kinship groups and the regulation of female be-

havior is integral to perceptions of honor, known as *maryada* in many Indian languages and as *ghairat* in Urdu and Pashto.

In such an environment, a woman who refuses to enter into an arranged marriage, seeks a divorce, or fails to avoid suspicion of immoral behavior will be viewed by her family as having dishonored them so grievously that her male relatives will be ostracized and her siblings will have trouble finding suitable spouses. Killing her is the only way the family can restore its honor, regardless of whether she actually is or can be proven guilty of the alleged offense. In sharp contrast to other forms of domestic violence, honor killings are frequently performed out in the

open, and the perpetrators rarely act alone. Unni Wikan, a social anthropologist and professor at the University of Oslo, observed that an honor killer typically commits the murder "as a commission from the extended family."⁴ The lead author of this article documented this in 2009⁵ and 2010⁶ for honor killings both in the West and in Muslim-majority countries.

Though neither Islam nor Hinduism directly sanctions honor killing, both play a role in legitimizing the practice in South Asia—if for no other reason than that such societies have not prosecuted this crime, have issued light sentences, or have failed to use their religious authority to punish and abolish it. Hindu society is divided

4 Unni Wikan, "The Honor Culture," Karl-Olov Arnstberg and Phil Holmes, trans., originally published as *En Fraga Om Hedre*, Cajsa Mitchell, trans. (Stockholm: Ordfront Forlag AB, 2005).

5 Phyllis Chesler, "Are Honor Killings Simply Domestic Violence?" *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2009, pp. 61-9.

6 Chesler, "Worldwide Trends in Honor Killings," pp. 3-11.

into religiously mandated castes, membership in which is hereditary and effectively permanent. At the lowest rung of the ladder are roughly 150 million Indians who are called Dalits (the oppressed), commonly known in the West as “untouchables.” Although many Dalits have reached high political office, notably former president K. R. Narayanan,⁷ they are still held in low regard by many other Indians.⁸

According to Hindu religious law and tradition, marrying or having sexual relations with a member of a different caste is strictly forbidden. So, too, is romantic involvement with someone from the same sub-caste (*gotra*),⁹ a proscription that contrasts notably with Muslim cultures where first cousin marriage is widely accepted. The vast majority of Hindu honor killings target young Indians suspected of violating one of these two commandments. In northern India, the murders are often explicitly sanctioned or even mandated by caste-based councils known as *khap panchayats*.¹⁰ Although the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 made inter-caste and intra-gotra marriages legal, both remain unacceptable to the large majority of Indian Hindus. According to a 2006 survey, 76 percent of the Indian public oppose inter-caste marriage.¹¹ In some areas of the country, any marriage not arranged by the family is widely regarded as taboo. “Love marriages are dirty ... only whores can choose their partners,” one council leader told an Indian reporter.¹²

Although Islam does not specifically endorse killing female family members, some honor killings involve allegations of adultery or apostasy, which are punishable by death under Shari‘a (Islamic law). Thus, the belief that women who stray from the path can be rightly murdered

is consistent with such Islamic teachings. The refusal of most Islamic authorities to unambiguously denounce the practice (as opposed to merely denying that Islam sanctions it) only encourages would-be honor killers.

While the Qur’an preaches the equality of all Muslims (or at least all Muslim males), and Islamic leaders frequently bemoan the evils of India’s caste system, vestiges of caste identification are evident among some Pakistani Muslims, who are descended from Hindus who were forcibly converted to Islam in the Middle Ages and were part of India before 1947.¹³

EMPIRICAL TRENDS

It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of honor killings that take place in Pakistan and India as the vast majority are believed to go unreported. In 2010, there were roughly 900 reported honor killings in the northern Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh alone while 100-300 additional honor killings took place in the rest of the country.¹⁴ Also in 2010, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 800 women were killed for honor in Pakistan.¹⁵ Both figures likely represent only the tip of the iceberg. According to the Aurat Foundation, a Pakistani human rights organization: “At least 675 Pakistani women and girls were murdered during the first nine months of the calendar year 2011 for allegedly defaming their family’s honor.” Almost 77 percent of such honor cases ended in acquittals.¹⁶ A similar study, published in 2011 by the

Government officials in Pakistan are either unable or unwilling to cope with honor killings.

7 *The New York Times*, July 26, 1997.

8 “Caste-based Discrimination in South Asia,” European Commission (Brussels) and the International Dalit Solidarity Network, June 2009; “Broken People: Caste Violence against India’s ‘Untouchables,’” Human Rights Watch, Washington, D.C., Apr. 1, 1999.

9 *The Australian* (Sydney), Apr. 3, 2010.

10 *Times of India* (Mumbai), Mar. 30, 2010.

11 *The New York Times*, July 9, 2010.

12 *Times of India*, Sept. 8, 2009.

13 See Yoginder Sikand, “Islam and Caste Inequality among Indian Muslims,” *Asianists’ Asia*, first published in *Qalandar* (Paris), T. Wignesan, ed., Mar. 2004; Anatol Lieven, *Pakistan. A Hard Country* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), pp. 101-2.

14 *The Hindu* (Chennai, Madras), July 11, 2010.

15 *Dawn* (Karachi), Aug. 9, 2011.

16 *Business Reporter* (Karachi), Jan. 5, 2012.

Research and Development for Human Resources Women Rights Cell, found that 605 women and 115 men in Sindh were honor murdered or murdered in domestic disputes that same year.¹⁷

In order to compare and contrast honor killings in India and Pakistan, a sample was taken of 75 Hindu honor killings in India, including 50 cases that were specifically caste-based and 25 where the motive was not clearly specific to caste. The Indian cases were compared to 50 Muslim honor killings in Pakistan and 39 Pakistani Muslim honor killings in the West. Hindu honor killings in the West have been too rare to allow for valid statistical comparisons.¹⁸ The researchers relied on English language media

reports for data,¹⁹ selecting the first cases that met the criteria of being a Hindu or Muslim honor killing and about which most of the following seven variables were known: location/religion; gender of victim; motive; the presence or absence of torture; age; number of victims per incident; and whether it was the

woman's or the man's family who committed the killing.

The average age of all of the victims in this study, both male and female, was 22, with no statistically significant differences among the groups. Overwhelmingly, it was the women's

families that committed the honor killings even in cases in which there were male victims. In India, 94 percent of the killings were carried out by the woman's family of origin. Four percent were killed jointly by both the man's and the woman's families of origin; in one case it was the allegedly shamed husband of a woman who did the killing; in no cases was it just the man's family of origin. In Pakistan, the woman's family of origin was responsible for 78 percent of the killings while husbands of "adulterous" wives accounted for another 16 percent. In 3 cases (6 percent) it was the man's family of origin that committed the murder. The number of husbands who were killers was highest in Pakistan because a large percentage of the Pakistani victims (30 percent) had been accused of adultery. Among Pakistani Muslims in the West, 97 percent of the killings were by the woman's family. This is to be expected, as it is women who are considered the keepers of male and family honor and responsibility to enforce society's honor code falls on the women's families.

A number of statistically significant differences are notable.

Gender of Victims. In 40 percent of the cases, Indian Hindus murdered men while Pakistani Muslims murdered men only 14 percent of the time in Pakistan and 15 percent of the time in the West. The higher percentage of male victims in India underscores the fact that Hindu honor killings are more often about caste purity than sexual purity. While sexual purity is traditionally a female responsibility, the religious mandate to maintain strict boundaries between castes is an obligation for all Hindus, both male and female.

Motivation. The reported motivations underlying the killings varied significantly across the three groups. The researchers identified four major motives among Indian Hindus: caste-specific motives, "immoral character," "contamination by association," and non-caste-specific illicit relationships, which included interfaith relationships, adultery, pregnancy out of wedlock, and illicit relationships that were considered shameful for unspecified reasons. "Contamination by association" victims were killed not because they had done anything wrong but be-

Among Pakistani Muslims, a woman's sexual and moral purity can be challenged as long as she lives.

17 Ibid., Jan. 9, 2012.

18 Chesler, "Worldwide Trends in Honor Killings," pp. 3-11.

19 For Indian Hindu cases: *The Times of India*, *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), Press Trust of India News Service (Delhi), *The Independent* (London), *The Washington Post*, Reuters, *The Hindu*, *Indian Express* (Chennai, Madras), *Outlook India* (New Delhi), *Thaindian News* (Bangkok), Indo-Asian News Service (New Delhi), and the BBC. For Pakistani cases: Associated Press, *The Pakistan Daily Times* (Lahore), *stophonourkillings.com*, *The Daily Telegraph* (London), *The News International* (Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi/Islamabad), *The Regional Times of Sindh* (Hyderabad and Karachi), *Dawn*, and *Pakistan Today* (Lahore). The Indian honor killings took place between 2001 and 2011; those in Pakistan between 1999 and 2011. The Pakistani honor killings in the West took place between 1998 and 2009.

cause of their association with the guilty party (mostly children of mothers who had been accused of violating sexual norms).

“Immoral character” victims were considered rebellious or licentious but were not suspected of being romantically involved with a specific individual. For example, Pakistani-Canadian Aqsa Parvez was lured to death by her mother and murdered by her father because she did not wear a *hijab* (head covering).²⁰ A 14-year-old Indian girl, S. Rajinilatha, was murdered by her father not because she was involved with any particular man but merely because she wrote love poetry.²¹ Meena, an 18-year-old Hindu girl, was shot to death because she left her village for three days, and her family was not satisfied with her explanation of where she had been.²²

In the case of Pakistani Muslims, the researchers identified three motives: illicit relationships, “contamination by association,” and “immoral character.” Only 4 percent of Muslim victims in Pakistan were killed because they were romantically involved with someone from a different caste, and caste was never a motive among Pakistani Muslims in the West. Consequently, the motive in this small number of cases was classified simply as “illicit relationship.”²³

The reported motivations of Muslim honor killers in Pakistan differed from those of Pakistani Muslims in the West. In Pakistan, 12 per-

Photo will not display.

In sharp contrast to other forms of domestic violence, honor killings are frequently performed out in the open; the perpetrators rarely act alone, and the murders are usually carried out by the woman's family of origin. Canadians were shocked recently at the trial of the Shafia family, Muhammad (right) and Tooba, who with the help of their son Hamed (left), drowned their three daughters along with Muhammad's first wife in a canal near Kingston, Ontario.

cent of the victims were “immoral character” victims. In the West, 65 percent of the victims were “immoral character” victims. This may be because there are so many more opportunities for “immoral” assimilation/independence in the West, and young Pakistani women living there may be pushing boundaries more forcefully.

There were also significantly more “contamination by association” victims among Pakistani Muslims, both in Pakistan and in the West, than among the Hindus in India. For example, one Pakistani Muslim case in the West involved the murder of an adult sister-in-law, her young child, and a father-in-law who happened to be in the battered wife’s new home at the time. Only 4 percent of the Indian Hindus killed were “contamination by association” victims (n=3), compared to 22 percent of the Pakistani Muslim victims in Pakistan (n=11) and 19 percent of Pakistani Muslim victims in the West (n=7). The overwhelming majority of Hindu killings are caste-related, generally targeting young men and women shortly after they eloped and before they could have children.

20 *The National Post* (Toronto), Dec. 12, 2007.

21 “‘Honour’ Killings on the Rise in Tamil Nadu,” *Stop Honour Killings*, London, Sept. 16, 2010.

22 *Times of India*, Feb. 16, 2011; *Mid-Day* (Mumbai and Delhi), Feb. 15, 2011.

23 See Sikand, “Islam and Caste Inequality among Indian Muslims.”



In India, honor murders are frequently sanctioned by caste-based councils known as khap panchayats. Filmmakers in India have sought to highlight the horrors of Hindu honor killings, such as this one portrayed in a film. But theaters in the northern province of Haryana refused to screen this film in 2011 and issued threats against those who would show the movie.

playing the family's determination to restore its honor at all costs. It is possible that the torture rate in Pakistan is comparable to that in India and that Pakistani police and media are more circumspect in revealing gruesome details.

Among Pakistani Muslim victims in the West, however, a staggering 59 percent were tortured. Perhaps this is because the perpetrators feel so besieged and humiliated by the surrounding culture that they must take more extreme measures to reclaim their honor and because so many Pakistani girls and women are tempted to assimilate.

Pakistani Muslim honor killings are more often about obedience in general, especially sexual purity, and a woman's sexual and moral purity can be challenged as long as she lives.

Torture. Some victims were killed in a manner clearly intended to maximize pain. For example, 17-year-old Anup Kumar of Haryana was electrocuted in 2011 for being in a relationship with a girl from the same sub-caste.²⁴ In Islamabad, 40-year-old Elahi Husain's brothers tied her to a tree and stoned her to death in 2007 for being in a relationship of which they disapproved.²⁵

The torture rate for Hindus in India (39 percent) was significantly higher than for Muslims in Pakistan (12 percent). Many of the Indian Hindu victims in this study were burned alive, electrocuted, or hacked to death. Even in cases where there was no torture, the bodies of the victims were often desecrated,²⁶ grimly dis-

PAKISTAN'S ACTIONS ON HONOR KILLINGS

In Pakistan, the fusion of Islamic beliefs, a patriarchal social order, and tribal segmentation have effectively reduced women to the status of chattel. Pakistan was ranked 133 out of 135 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2011 Global Gender Gap report.²⁷ A 2011 survey by the Thomson Reuters Foundation ranked Pakistan as the third most dangerous country in the world for women (India was fourth).²⁸

According to Homa Arjomand, the Canadian lawyer who led the successful fight against the imposition of Shari'a law in Ontario, the lives of most girls and women in Pakistan are routinely terrible. They can expect that their husbands will rape and beat them savagely, often

²⁴ *Times of India*, Jan. 28, 2011.

²⁵ *The Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 31, 2007.

²⁶ Reuters, May 16, 2008; *The Economist*, Apr. 15, 2010.

²⁷ *The Global Gender Gap Report 2011*, The World Economic Forum, Geneva, Nov. 2011.

²⁸ "The World's Most Dangerous Countries for Women," Thomson Reuters Foundation, New York, June 15, 2011.

breaking their bones and knocking out their teeth; they may face extreme sadism during pregnancy as well as unhygienic and dangerous confinement as a permanent way of life; their families will not help them.²⁹

The summary execution of female relatives for a wide range of suspected moral infractions is considered justifiable by many Pakistanis.³⁰ Tribal councils often sanction the practice³¹ while local police turn a blind eye. Because of this impunity, honor killing is sometimes used as a pretext for other crimes. For example, according to Muhammad Haroon Bahlkani, an officer in the Community Development Department in Sindh, Pakistan, a “man can murder another man for unrelated reasons, kill one of his own female relatives, and then credibly blame his first victim for dishonoring the second. Or he can simply kill one of his female relatives, accuse someone rich of involvement with her, and extract financial compensation in exchange for forgoing vengeance.” Bahlkani has a name for this: the “Honor Killing Industry.”³²

In Pakistan, many honor killings are known as *karo-kari* killings, which literally means “black male” and “black female” in Urdu and refers to cases in which adulterers are killed together. However, according to Bahlkani, there is an escape clause, but only for the men who can run away, hide, or pay restitution. Women are confined to the home, and few people will shelter a female runaway.

Although senior Pakistani officials have frequently denounced the practice of honor killing, little of substance has been achieved in combating it. While the penal code was stiffened in 2005 to impose a 10-year minimum sentence for honor killing,³³ legislative initiatives to protect women from domestic violence have been repeatedly

watered down or abandoned in the face of Islamist opposition. In 2009, Pakistan’s National Assembly passed the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, which strengthened legal protections against domestic violence for women and children. However, the Council of Islamic Ideology, a constitutional body charged with assessing whether laws are consistent with Islamic injunctions, issued a statement saying the bill “would fan unending family feuds and push up divorce rates.” After this, the bill was held up in the Pakistani senate and allowed to lapse. According to Special Public Prosecutor Nghat Dad, “The government’s attitude towards pushing for the cause has been hopeless ever since the Council of Islamic Ideology’s opposition.”³⁴

Under Shari‘a-based provisions of Pakistan’s judicial system, murderers can buy a pardon by paying blood money (*dyad*) to the victim’s family. Since the family of honor killing victims are nearly always sympathetic to the honor killer as well as complicit to some degree, getting a pardon is usually just a formality.³⁵ Women’s rights organizations in Pakistan have pressed parliament to disallow the practice of blood money in honor killing cases, but conservative Islamist groups have blocked the needed legislation.

Even when such arrangements do not take place, honor killers are rarely prosecuted for lack of cooperative witness testimony. For those few who happen to be convicted, a light prison sentence is far preferable to dishonor. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in a recent report: “The legal, preventative, and protective measures needed to provide effective protection to women against violence perpe-

The summary execution of female relatives for suspected moral infractions is considered justifiable by many Pakistanis.

29 Homa Arjomand, “Effect of globalization of political Islam on women,” www.nosharia.com, accessed Mar. 28, 2012.

30 See, for example, Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong, May 12, 2011; *The China Post* (Taipei), Mar. 10, 2012; BBC Urdu, Aug. 29, 2008.

31 Lieven, *Pakistan*, pp. 101-2.

32 Correspondence with Muhammad Haroon Bahlkani, 2010, 2011.

33 *USA Today*, Dec. 28, 2005.

34 Iffat Gill, “Can legal reforms protect women in Pakistan?” *Worldpulse.com*, Portland, Ore., Mar. 29, 2011.

35 BBC, Mar. 2, 2005.

trated in the name of honor remained absent.”³⁶

INDIA'S ACTIONS ON HONOR KILLINGS

Indian society at large is no less misogynistic than that of Pakistan. Since boys are preferred and girls are seen as a burden, an estimated four to twelve million selective abortions of girls have occurred in India in the past three decades.³⁷ The 2011 Indian census found 914 girls for every 1,000 boys among children six or younger.³⁸ Dowry burnings, the practice of a

man and his mother dousing his wife with cooking oil and burning her alive so that a new bride and dowry can be obtained, are as big a problem as honor killings in India.³⁹

As the Indian media have fastidiously documented,⁴⁰ there has been a marked increase in the number of reported honor killings in recent years. In 2010, a govern-

ment-funded study on the prevalence of honor crimes in India found that they are most common in regions dominated by *khap panchayats* and increasingly involve inter-caste, rather than intra-sub-caste marriages.⁴¹ In these regions, local politicians turn a blind eye to the murders and resist efforts by the central government and parliament to deal with the problem while local

police collude in honor killings⁴² or help cover them up, often mischaracterizing the murders as suicides.⁴³ In 2011, theaters in Haryana refused to screen an Indian film on honor killings because of threats by *khap panchayats*.⁴⁴

According to Prem Chowdhry of the Delhi School of Economics, honor killings were less frequent in the past “because elopements didn’t happen ... livelihood was so clearly tied to the land, and the land was so clearly enmeshed in these relationships.”⁴⁵ Greater socioeconomic mobility has weakened these bonds. As *khap panchayats* struggle against modernization, preserving their traditional power means retaining control over reproduction, and they have resorted to violence to achieve this.

In sharp contrast to their Pakistani counterparts, Indian government officials have vigorously condemned honor killings in their country.⁴⁶ So, too, have liberal Indian media outlets,⁴⁷ some of which have done aggressive investigative reporting on the issue. In 2010, an undercover reporter working for the Indian television channel Headlines Today found two policemen from the northern state of Haryana who boasted about their willingness to hand over a young woman to be honor murdered. “Cut her into pieces and then throw her in some river,” one said.⁴⁸ A number of Indian nongovernmental organizations are working to defend women from honor killings. The Love Commandos, with 2,000 volunteers and a 24-hour national hotline, are devoted to protecting newlyweds who defy their families.⁴⁹

In 2010, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh ordered a cabinet-level commission to draft national legislation designed to eradicate honor

New Delhi has not encountered the virulent, often violent, opposition to women’s rights typical of Pakistani Islamists.

36 “State of Human Rights in 2010,” Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Lahore, Apr. 2011, p. 206.

37 Prabhat Jha, et al., “Trends in selective abortions of girls in India: analysis of nationally representative birth histories from 1990 to 2005 and census data from 1991 to 2011,” *The Lancet*, May 24, 2011, pp. 1921-8.

38 *The New York Times*, May 24, 2011.

39 BBC, July 16, 2003.

40 *The New York Times*, July 9, 2010.

41 *The Tribune* (Chandigarh, India), May 14, 2011.

42 “India: Prosecute Rampant ‘Honor’ Killings: Amend and Enforce Laws to End Barbaric Practice,” Human Rights Watch, New York, July 18, 2010.

43 See, for example, *Times of India*, Mar. 15, 2011.

44 *Indian Express*, July 30, 2011.

45 *The Australian*, Apr. 23, 2010.

46 See, for example, *Times of India*, Aug. 1, 2010.

47 “Barbarian Face,” *ibid.*, July 4, 2007.

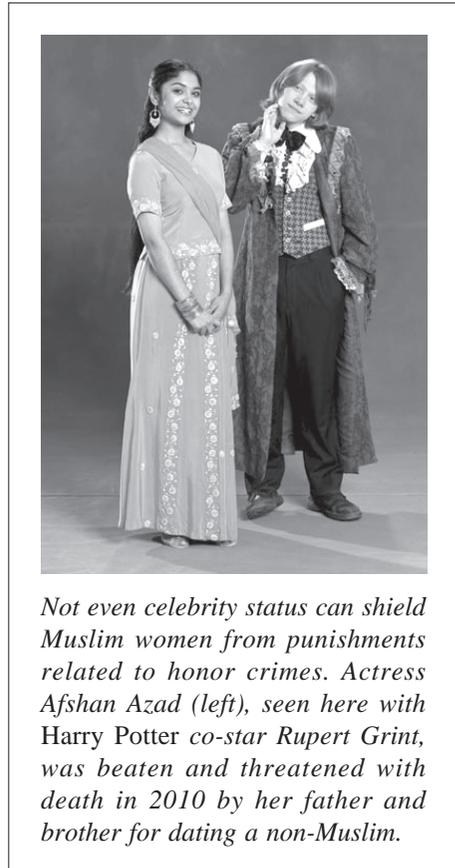
48 *India Today* (New Delhi), Sept. 17, 2010.

49 *The Guardian* (London), Oct. 10, 2010.

killing.⁵⁰ The proposals included an amendment to the penal code allowing *khap panchayats* leaders to be prosecuted for sanctioning murders as well as the revocation of the 30-day notice period required by the Special Marriage Act, which has enabled families to track down and preemptively kill the couples.⁵¹ In 2011, the Law Commission of India, under the Ministry of Law and Justice, drafted a new bill—The Endangerment of Life and Liberty (Protection, Prosecution and Other Measures) Act—designed to prevent *khap panchayats* from denouncing couples who violate caste restrictions. According to the bill,

It shall be unlawful for any group of persons to gather, assemble or congregate with the ... intention to deliberate, declare on, or condemn any marriage or relationship such as marriage between two persons of majority age in the locality concerned on the basis that such conduct or relationship has dishonored the caste or community or religion of all or some of the persons forming part of the assembly or the family or the people of the locality concerned.⁵²

The fate of this legislation is uncertain, however, as the *khap panchayats*' control over local voting blocs has enabled them to blunt legislative reforms in the past. The government has made more progress on the judicial front. In 2010, India's Supreme Court instructed the governments in Haryana and six other states to take steps to protect potential honor killing victims.⁵³ In 2011, it decried honor killing as a "barbaric and shameful" practice that must be "ruthlessly stamped out."⁵⁴ The court also declared honor killings ordered by *khap panchayats* to be illegal and warned that government officials who fail to act against honor crime offenders will be prosecuted.⁵⁵



Not even celebrity status can shield Muslim women from punishments related to honor crimes. Actress Afshan Azad (left), seen here with Harry Potter co-star Rupert Grint, was beaten and threatened with death in 2010 by her father and brother for dating a non-Muslim.

Although fear of caste ostracism makes it difficult to find cooperative witnesses, Indian courts have begun aggressively prosecuting honor killers and their accomplices. In 2010, a Haryana court sentenced five men to death for the honor murder of a young couple who had married despite being members of the same sub-caste while giving a life sentence to the head of the *khap panchayat* that ordered their deaths.⁵⁶ In November 2011, an Indian court sentenced eight men to death and twenty others to life imprisonment for involvement in three honor killings.⁵⁷ Increasingly, local police officials have been suspended and even arrested for collusion in honor killings.⁵⁸

50 *Times of India*, July 9, 2010.

51 "India: Prosecute Rampant 'Honor' Killings," July 18, 2010.

52 *The Hindu*, June 8, 2011.

53 *Times of India*, June 21, 2010.

54 BBC, Apr. 20, 2011.

55 "Crime and Punishment," *Times of India*, Apr. 27, 2011.

56 *The Australian*, Apr. 3, 2010.

57 *International Business Times* (New York), Nov. 16, 2011.

58 *The Australian*, Apr. 3, 2010.

India still has a long way to go. While the Indian government continues to face resistance and evasion of responsibility on the part of local officials, it has not encountered the same kind of virulent, often violent, opposition to women's rights typical of Pakistani Islamists. There is little doubt that India is determined to win what promises to be a long battle against honor killing. The Western media's interest in Hindu honor killings developed only after Indians themselves began exposing the practice and pressing for change.

CONCLUSION

Although Hindu honor killing is a gruesome and sordid affair, it differs in many important respects from honor killing in neighboring Paki-

stan and other Muslim countries. Indian Hindus murder men for honor more often than do Pakistani Muslims, and they murder for reasons mainly related to concerns about caste purity.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Hindu honor killings is the fact that Indians abandon the horrific practice when they migrate to the

West whereas many Pakistani Muslims carry it with them. Part of the explanation may lie in their different patterns of acculturation upon immigrating to the West. Young Hindus in the West are no

less prone to violate traditional social codes than young Muslims, and their parents may be no less furious when they do, but Hindu families in the West do not feel the same degree of public humiliation and shame as they might experience back in India. They are eager to preserve their cultural identity but not at the expense of alienating their adoptive communities. The absence of dreaded *khap panchayats* no doubt mitigates the consequences of dishonor.

Due in part to the spread of radical Islamist ideology, Muslim immigrants in the West are either radicalized or socialize predominantly within Muslim-only communities, and their conception of honor reflects this. Even affluent young women of Pakistani descent in the West can face the credible threat of death or severe bodily harm. Actress Afshan Azad, who played Padma Patil in the Harry Potter film series, was beaten and threatened with death in 2010 by her Pakistani father and brother for dating a non-Muslim.⁵⁹ If she can be victimized, anyone can.

While it is alarming that there are so many honor killings in India and Pakistan, there may yet be cause for hope. Every honor killing begins with a rebellion against tribalism and patriarchy—or with a fear that tribal and patriarchal values are under attack. Many of the victims in our study were people who believed that they could push traditional boundaries, that they could get away with asserting their rights. They were wrong, and they paid the ultimate price for that mistake, but the key is that they tried. More rebels will follow.



59 *The Telegraph*, Dec. 20, 2010.

Indians abandon honor killing when they migrate to the West whereas many Pakistani Muslims carry it with them.

Are Iraq and Turkey Models for Democratization?

by Ofra Bengio

In the wake of the upheavals that have shaken the Arab world since December 2010, activists, politicians, and analysts have all been searching for new democratic models of governance that could come into force in these lands. The cases of Iraq and Turkey are perhaps the most obvious choices to examine based on the notion that these are the only examples of functioning democracies within Muslim-majority nations of the Middle East.

Hoping to turn post-Saddam Iraq into a model to be emulated by the Arab states, the Bush administration set out to create an Athens-on-the-Tigris complete with free elections and a constitution with separation of powers provisions. Although the Turkish model had a completely different genesis and evolution, it is worth exploring as Ankara has proclaimed itself a model for the post-revolutionary regimes. What lessons can be drawn from the Iraqi and Turkish experiences, and to what extent do they fit other Middle Eastern states?

THE IRAQI MODEL

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the Western powers sought to graft onto the political systems of the newly-born Arab states the values of democracy, constitutionalism, and pluralism. As soon as Britain obtained the mandate for Iraq in 1920, it set out to build a democratic system very much resembling the British model itself. This included the establishment

of a constitutional monarchy subordinate to a progressive constitution, the establishment of a parliament with upper and lower houses, and the launching of a nationwide system of elections. However, this edifice crumbled on the first day of Abd al-Karim Qassem's July 1958 putsch, and it would take nearly fifty years, and a large scale foreign invasion of Iraq, before an attempt at its reconstitution would be made. What went so horribly wrong? And are the new circumstances more conducive to the success of the nascent Iraqi democracy?

The evident answer to the first question is that this construction was imposed artificially on a society that had different cultural, political, and social values and did not evolve from within the society itself. Even if Iraqis wished to have a Western-type constitution, they had no say in its promulgation. In the words of the British president of the Iraqi Court of First Instance, the constitution was a "gift from the West."¹

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Similarly, although there was a parliament in place, it did not function in a healthy or normal fashion: During its entire existence, the legislature never cast a single no-confidence vote against the cabinet, rubber-stamping its decisions while simultaneously suffering sporadic dissolutions.² While elections were held, they were rigged time and time again. In short there was a façade of democratic institutions but the ideas and practices never set down roots in society. With Qassem's takeover and the murder of the entire royal family, the democratic project expired.

The idea of reviving the democratic project in Iraq began to gather momentum in 1998, once again spurred not by Iraqis themselves but by an outside superpower, the United States. Thus, according to the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act, "it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government in place of that regime."³

In time, the moving spirit behind the project of Iraqi democratization came to be President George W. Bush who was, in a fashion, walking in the footsteps of his British predecessors. His

declared goal was to help the downtrodden people of Iraq get rid of their oppressor and bring progress and democracy to the state. But in Bush's case another more ambitious target was stated as well, namely turning the post-Saddam Iraqi democracy into a model for other Arab countries

to follow. Thus, on the eve of the invasion he declared: "A free Iraq can be a source of hope

for all the Middle East ... instead of threatening its neighbors and harboring terrorists, Iraq can be an example of progress and prosperity in a region that needs both."⁴ On another occasion, he stated: "The nation of Iraq, with its proud heritage, abundant resources, and skilled and educated people, is fully capable of moving toward democracy and living in freedom."⁵

But how has this democracy fared in Iraq itself? Can it serve as a model or "a source of hope" to other Arab countries?

FLAWS IN THE IRAQI MODEL

Regrettably, the haste with which the framework of democracy was put together in post-Saddam Iraq is reminiscent of the earlier British experiment in the same country. This time, however, the constitution generated debates and disputes between different partners regarding such issues as the place of religion in the state or the role of women.⁶ Overall, these controversies centered on what *The Wall Street Journal* described as "two very different visions of what the new Iraq should be: a nation that gives little political significance to ethnic and religious divisions, or one that weaves those divisions into the political fabric."⁷ And although Iraqis did have an important say in composing it, for many of them, the constitution and, for that matter, the democratic experiment as a whole looked like a U.S. diktat.⁸

Unlike in the monarchical and Baathist eras, the Iraqi people did participate in three more or less free and democratic elections. However, while the framework of democratic institutions

For many Iraqis, the constitution and the democratic experiment looked like a U.S. diktat.

1 C. A. Hooper, *The Constitutional Law of Iraq* (Baghdad: Mackenzie and Mackenzie, 1928), p. 15.

2 Abd al-Razzaq al-Hasani, *Ta'rikh al-'Iraq as-Siyasi al-Hadith*, vol. 3 (Sidon: Matba'at al-'Urfan, 1957), p. 235.

3 "Iraq Liberation Act of 1998," 105th U.S. Congress (1997-98), H.R.4655.ENR, Jan. 27, 1998.

4 *The Washington Post*, Feb. 22, 2003.

5 George Bush, speech to the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., in *The Guardian* (London), Feb. 27, 2003.

6 "Iraq Overview: Governance," World Directory of Minority and Indigenous Rights, Minority Rights Group International, London, accessed Mar. 7, 2012.

7 *The Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 12, 2004.

8 For voices critical of this constitution, see Andrew Arato, *Constitution Making under Occupation: The Politics of Imposed Revolution in Iraq* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 205-49.

does exist, the spirit and contents are lacking. More often than not the parliament is paralyzed. It took an entire year to form a cabinet after the March 2010 elections because of incumbent Nouri al-Maliki's reluctance to give up his post. Although the list headed by Iyad Allawi scored the highest number of votes in that election, Maliki's maneuvering and shrewdness won him the prime ministry in the end.⁹

Civilian strife that flared up immediately after the U.S.-led invasion also threatened the entire Iraqi democratization project. The underlying cause for this conflict was that the minority Sunni community that had ruled Iraq since its creation was unwilling to accept the democratic norms that granted power to the erstwhile marginalized Shiite majority and the Kurds. In addition, the sudden change from an extremely totalitarian political system to an avowedly democratic one left the majority of Iraqis completely unprepared for such a transformation. Further, the freedom of expression and organization incorporated in the post-Saddam Iraq constitution gave rise to new Islamist forces, which believed more in God's rule than in the rule of man. In the debates that anticipated the drafting of the constitution, these groups, headed by Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, demanded that Shari'a (Islamic law) be the source of legislation. It was not to be, however, because both Washington and the Kurds were against it.

Two sectors in particular fell victim to the expanding power of political Islam and the illiberal society developing in Iraq: women and minorities. As part of their efforts to construct a new Iraqi society, Washington and its allies placed special emphasis on the status of women, believing it would be impossible to establish democracy in a country that lacked equitable representation for women. Initially women did seem to be well represented in the echelons of power. However, as time went by, the increasing



The first modern Iraqi constitution was imposed by the British on the people of Mesopotamia as was its first modern king, Faisal I (center; T.E. Lawrence is behind him on the right). Neither really took, and Iraq's first experiment with democracy ended in bloodshed.

influence of Islamic groups further restricted their participation in the government. For example, by May 2006, only four out of thirty-nine cabinet ministers were women, none in important portfolios. In daily life, many women are harassed for not adhering to what is considered a proper Islamic dress code. Acts of violence, including killing, kidnapping, rape, and other forms of sexual harassment increased significantly in post-Saddam Iraq, so much so that some contend that women were better off under Saddam.¹⁰ Iraqi women's rights activists are, in turn, accused of trying to impose secularism and foreign values. Thus, women were once again "left outside state supervision, vulnerable to unfavorable interpretations of Islamic and customary laws."¹¹

The fate of minorities has fared no better. A 2007 field study reached the conclusion that

10 See, for example, Judith Colp, "Women in the New Iraq," *MERIA Journal*, Sept. 3, 2008.

11 Noga Efrat, "Women under the monarchy: A backdrop for post-Saddam events," in Amatzia Baram, Achim Rohde, and Ronen Zeidel, eds., *Iraq between Occupations: Perspectives from 1920 to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 121-3.

9 "Nuri Kamal al-Maliki," *The New York Times*, Dec. 29, 2011.



Iraq's current experiment in constitutional government is off to a shaky and uncertain start. Despite Iyad Allawi (left) scoring the highest number of votes in the March 2010 elections, the candidate was compelled to hand the prime minister's post to his chief rival, Nouri al-Maliki (right).

Iraq's Christian, Yazidi, and Mandaean communities was under threat and that the majority of Christians had fled their homes with nearly half living abroad as refugees. The report emphasized that Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities were targeted for acts of violence and discrimination precisely because they were non-Muslim or Kurdish.¹² It is indeed ironic that, under the watchful eyes of the U.S. military, the harassment of indigenous Christians and other religious minorities has reached its peak.¹³

For their part, the Kurds, since the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 1992, sought to portray themselves as a model of democracy for Iraq and other countries in the region. They based their claim on the

fact that there was no fratricidal infighting among them since the late 1990s; that elections in the region and the transformation of power from one government to another went smoothly; and that there was freedom of expression and organization. Indeed, though this democracy left much to be desired, it was still stronger than in the rest of Iraq. This was due to both the slower pace of developments in the region and the fact that the framework of democratic institutions was not imposed from the outside (though non-governmental organizations played an important role in promoting the process). Islamist parties were also much weaker in Kurdistan than in the center of the country.

The eruption of the Arab upheavals at the end of 2010 rekindled the debate over the Iraqi democratization model both in the United States and the Arab world. There were those who considered these events as having been inspired by the Iraqi model and the promotion of democracy there. For instance, Condoleezza Rice, secretary of state under Bush, credited the administration for the Arab uprisings: "The demise of repressive governments in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere ... stemmed in part from Bush's 'freedom agenda,'" which "promoted democracy in the Middle East."¹⁴ Former vice president Dick Cheney stressed that "the fact that we brought democracy ... and freedom to Iraq, has had a ripple effect on some of those other countries."¹⁵

Others were more skeptical. Middle East specialist Fouad Ajami debunked what he termed the "myth" that the Arab upheavals were inspired by developments in Iraq, noting that when the protests began in late 2010, "there was bloodshed in Iraq's streets; there was sectarianism, and few Arabs could consider Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki a standard-bearer of a new political culture." In his view, Saddam's

12 John Eibner, "The Plight of Christians in Iraq," field trip report, Christian Solidarity International, Westlake Village, Calif., Nov. 3-11, 2007.

13 Ibid.

14 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (New York: Crown, 2011); *USA Today*, Oct. 31, 2011.

15 *The Washington Post*, Aug. 31, 2011.

“despotism had been decapitated by American power, so it was not a homegrown liberation. And the new Iraqi order had empowered the Shiite majority.” In addition, the Sunni “Arab street was not enamored of the political change in Iraq; it had passionately opposed the American war and had no use for Baghdad’s new Shiite leaders.”¹⁶

The late Anthony Shadid of *The New York Times* was even more negative: “My own sense ... is that the Iraq war—the invasion of 2003 and the aftermath—delayed the Arab Spring. I think you can make the argument that these revolts and uprisings that have swept the region may have even happened earlier had not this scar of that occupation not been left on the region.”¹⁷

The Iraqi model of democracy is a poor example to be emulated by other Arab states due to the civil strife that accompanied its birth, because it was viewed as an artificial Western diktat, and because it seemed to be lacking authenticity and staying power. There was, however, something to be learned from the Iraqi experience, namely that the ruler was not invincible and that the worst of dictatorships can be destroyed once the barrier of fear was overcome. In this sense, developments in post-Saddam Iraq did serve as a catalyst for the revolutions in the Arab countries even though they took some eight years to mature.

If Iraq has failed to serve as a democratic model, does Turkey offer a better example?

THE TURKISH MODEL

For many years, Turkey was considered an island of democracy in an otherwise autocratic Muslim world. Writing in 1994, Bernard Lewis attributed Turkey’s position as “the only Muslim democracy” to various historical, political, and socioeconomic factors: Turkey had never been occupied by a foreign

power that attempted to impose Western democratic values upon it. Rather, democracy was nourished slowly and gradually within Turkish society itself. From the start, Ankara was Western-oriented, hence more adaptive to the democratic norms developed there. Though lacking oil, Turkey was able to develop a strong economy, which in turn enabled it to cultivate a civil society, an important pillar of democracy. Last, but certainly not least, in Turkey there was a separation between religion and state. Despite three interventions by the Turkish military between the 1960s and early 1990s, the generals handed power back to civilians after a brief period, indicating a commitment to democratic norms.¹⁸

Almost two decades later, the picture in Turkey has changed dramatically. Since 2002, the ruling Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) has managed to marginalize the military in politics, and Ankara is no longer chiefly Western-oriented, having developed strong ties with the Muslim Arab Middle East as well. These transformations also meant that Ankara sought to serve as a model for the democratization of post-revolutionary Arab regimes, a role that held no attraction for it before a decade ago.

The Turkish leaders’ claims to such a role are based on the fact that Turkey is a Muslim-majority state; hence, they argue, Ankara is the best proof that Islam and democracy are compatible. Turkish economist Sinan Ülgen has suggested that the Turkish model is more appropriate for the Arab world “not so much because of what Turkey does but because of what it is.” He points to the cultural affinity between Ankara and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, which “find Turkey’s own ex-

Turkey was once considered an island of democracy in an otherwise autocratic Muslim world.

¹⁶ Fouad Ajami, “Perspective: Five Myths about the Arab Spring,” *St. Augustine (Fla.) Record*, Jan. 15, 2012.

¹⁷ National Public Radio, Dec. 21, 2011.

¹⁸ Bernard Lewis, “Why Turkey Is the Only Muslim Democracy,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Mar. 1994, pp. 41-9.

perience more meaningful and see it as more relevant and transposable than the similar experiences of non-Muslim nations.” He maintains that Turkey’s domestic transformation, brought about by the ruling AKP party with roots in political Islam, can only enhance the effectiveness of such cultural affinity.¹⁹

Erdoğan’s popularity has much to do with the AKP’s confrontational stance on Israel and Turkey’s economic achievements.

Ankara, furthermore, asserts that after detaching the military from the domestic political game in a peaceful manner, Turkey is an even stronger candidate for emulation by emerging Arab governments who are struggling with decades-long intervention by military-led regimes.²⁰ Similarly, the AKP contends that Turkey’s long experience with home-

grown democracy can assist Arab societies in establishing their own democratic institutions in this period of transition.²¹ It also has claimed that it has stood by the Arab revolutionaries in their difficult times, a further incentive for Arab states to follow in its footsteps.²² Taha Özhan of the Washington-based Turkish think-tank SETA went so far as to suggest that Turkey’s policies and stance on various regional issues had an impact on the eruption of the Arab revolutions. He suggested that to “understand the impact of Turkey in the making of the Arab spring” one should consider that “Turkey ... has been a success story for those countries suffering from a lack of democratization, economic development, and distribution of income, and despised and oppressed by Israel.”²³

Two Turkish scholars, Nuh Yılmaz and Kadir Üstün have summed up Turkey’s vision thus: While “Turkey’s transformation from a staunchly secularist NATO ally under military tutelage to a democratic model did not occur overnight ... Turkish democracy has matured, and Ankara feels confident enough to present itself as an inspiration to the Middle East.”²⁴ Ersat Hurmuzlu, an advisor to Turkish president Abdullah Gül, insists that “Turkey is not looking for a role but the role is looking for it.”²⁵

The Turkish government took some practical and energetic moves to promote itself as a role model, inviting members of the opposition and new would-be political leaders to Istanbul to participate in conferences and seminars on the democratization project. For example, the Syrian opposition movement (including members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood) has held meetings in Turkey to prepare for a post-Assad regime in Syria. At the same time, Turkish universities, nongovernmental organizations, and research institutions have upgraded their relations with Arab countries while academic gatherings, common broadcasts, and forums have reached an unprecedented level.²⁶

Seeking to derive the most from the current revolutionary momentum, Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan set out in September 2011 on an “Arab Spring tour,” visiting the post-upheaval states of Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, the tour “has been a hit” as Erdoğan made his way across North Africa, “extolling Turkey as a democratic model for fellow Muslims who have cast off their dictators.”²⁷ In Libya, for example, prayer leader Salim al-Shaykhi told the crowd of several thousand in Tripoli’s Martyrs’ Square: “After we thank God, we thank our friend Mr. Erdoğan, and after him all the Turkish people.”²⁸

19 Sinan Ülgen, “From Aspiration to Inspiration: Turkey in the New Middle East,” *Carnegie Papers*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., Dec. 2011, p. 1.

20 Taha Özhan, “The Arab Spring and Turkey: The Camp David Order vs. the New Middle East,” *Insight Turkey*, no. 4, 2011, p. 55.

21 Ülgen, “Turkey in the New Middle East,” p. 1.

22 Özhan, “The Arab Spring and Turkey,” p. 63; *The Asia Times* (Hong Kong), Sept. 11, 2011.

23 Özhan, “The Arab Spring and Turkey,” p. 59.

24 Nuh Yılmaz and Kadir Üstün, “The Erdoğan Effect: Turkey, Egypt and the Future of the Middle East,” *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, Fall 2011.

25 *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), Sept. 14, 2011.

26 Özhan, “The Arab Spring and Turkey,” p. 61.

27 *The Christian Science Monitor*, Sept. 16, 2011.

28 *Ibid.*

Özhan has written that “people who want to change towards a model based on Turkey enthusiastically welcomed Prime Minister Erdoğan, openly asking him to fill the political vacuum after the Arab revolutions.”²⁹

Arab commentators have followed suit. Abd al-Bari Atwan stated that “the AKP has become a sort of guide for Islamist parties” which sought to imitate its economic achievements.³⁰ Others spoke about the admiration that these parties had for the Turkish model.³¹ Syrian scholar Sadik al-Azm argued that by the time of the Arab upheavals, all the factions in those countries—leftists, nationalists, and Islamists, who for their own reasons had had a negative view of Turkey—came to regard “the Turkish model” as the best paradigm to be followed.³²

Erdoğan was welcomed as a hero by crowds in these countries. But this enthusiastic welcome should not be interpreted as wholehearted support for the democratic model. For all the assertions—from Turkish and non-Turkish sources—there is clear evidence that Erdoğan’s popularity had to do with other causes, including his government’s Islamist tendencies, his confrontational stance on Israel, and Turkey’s economic achievements under the AKP.

The election of the Islamist AKP in 2002 was a watershed in the Arab world’s interest in Ankara and in its new, positive attitude toward Turkey. There seems to be a clear correlation between a more positive view about Turkey and changes in Turkish foreign policy, particularly with respect to the bilateral relationship with Israel and the Palestinian issue.³³ The most dra-

Turkish president Erdoğan’s mixture of Islamism and democracy has been suggested by many as a possible model for the Arab world’s recent revolutions.

matic example came in the aftermath of the 2008-09 Israel-Hamas-Gaza confrontation. As Palestinian journalist Sameh Habeeb stated:

Turkish prime minister Erdoğan criticizing Israel and then leaving the meeting with Israeli president Shimon Peres was the turning point for Turkey in the Arab street ... In a short span of time and in the hearts and minds of those within the Arab street and the global activist community, Erdoğan became a key player in the Middle East, especially in the absence of any real Arab leadership.³⁴

Turkey’s vibrant economy may have also made it particularly attractive for reformers.³⁵ As one Turkish analyst suggested, “In sum, the AKP’s bottom-up connection with Islam, the economic dynamics that compelled Turkey to seek an active political and economic role in the region, and Turkey’s gradual transformation into a soft power have constituted the main pillars of the Turkish model.”³⁶

29 Özhan, “The Arab Spring and Turkey,” p. 59.

30 Agence France-Presse, Dec. 2, 2011.

31 See, for example, Ibrahim al-Amin, “Islamists in North Africa and the Turkish Model,” *Alakhbar* (Cairo), Oct. 24, 2011.

32 Sadik J. al-Azm, “The ‘Turkish Model’: A View from Damascus,” *Turkish Studies*, Dec. 2011, pp. 638-40.

33 Meliha Benli Altunışık, “Turkey: Arab Perspectives,” *Foreign Policy Analysis Series*, no. 11, p. 12.

34 *The Palestine Telegraph* (Gaza), Sept. 20, 2011.

35 Altunışık, “Turkey: Arab Perspectives,” p. 10.

36 Alper Y. Dede, “The Arab Uprisings: Debating ‘The Turkish Model,’” *Insight Turkey*, Apr.-June 2011, p. 28.

Photo will not display.

Many Arabs who initially praised the “Turkish model” have become disillusioned as they examine the facts on the ground. The government of Recep Erdoğan has jailed dissidents, censored journalists, and accused members of the military of taking part in conspiracies. Gen. Isik Koşaner (left), the former Turkish chief of staff, here with Turkish president Abdullah Gül, recently resigned in protest over the arrest of more than forty of his fellow generals.

DISTRUST OF THE TURKISH MODEL

At the same time, skepticism about the Turkish model began to surface little by little. Sami Zubaida of the University of London took issue with Turkish democracy as a model for post-revolutionary Arab regimes and raised concerns regarding the fortune of Turkish democracy under the AKP, stating that “pluralism is now threatened by the repeated electoral successes of the AKP, establishing, in effect, the bases for a majoritarian authoritarianism, at both the institutional and the communal levels.”³⁷ Abdel Moneim Said, chairman of the board of *al-Ahram Weekly*, a government mouthpiece, admitted to admiring Erdoğan and his achievements but declared that Egypt had

no need for the caliphate. ... Historically, Egypt had always offered a model of its own, to which testifies the birth of the modern Egyptian state in 1922 ... maybe we will summon the courage to return to our own indig-

enous principles of civil government as laid down by the fathers of the Egyptian state.³⁸

Said’s critique was echoed by Hassan Abou Taleb of the al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies who asked rhetorically, “Following the Turkish model or forging our own?” Taleb insisted that there was no resemblance whatsoever between the experience of Turkey and Egypt as the former had a long, if imperfect, tradition of democracy and maintained that unlike Egypt’s Salafis, the AKP “has never cast itself as a religious party that

has sought to transform the state into a form of theocracy.” He added,

Egypt has its own long heritage of a liberal secularism that is at peace with religion. This legacy should enable Egypt to develop a unique, homegrown model for the application of democracy and the rule of law, even if the Muslim Brotherhood comes to share in power via the ballot box.³⁹

Nor was the Turkish model more acceptable to the Muslim Brotherhood, the largest party in Egypt. The initial enthusiastic welcome for Erdoğan in Cairo was muted by his statement that the establishment of a secular state was the best option for Egypt. Mahmud Ghuzlan, spokesman for Egypt’s Brotherhood, characterized these comments as interference in Egypt’s domestic affairs, noting that the experiments of other countries should not be cloned while disparaging Turkey’s Kemalist history as “conditions imposed on it to deal with the secular con-

³⁸ *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), Sept. 22-28, 2011.

³⁹ Hassan Abou Taleb, “Following the Turkish Model or Forging Our Own?” *al-Ahram*, Sept. 19, 2011.

³⁷ *The Samosa* (U.K.), June 6, 2011.

cept.”⁴⁰ Turkish analyst Shebnem Gumuscu came to the same conclusion, albeit from a different perspective, asserting there is no “Turkish model for Egypt.” She explained:

The coexistence between Islam and democracy has come to pass in Turkey not from the AKP’s development of institutional and political structures that accommodated both Islamic and democratic principles, but rather because Islamists themselves came to accept the secular-democratic framework of the Turkish state.⁴¹

Even more compelling criticism of the Turkish model has arisen as analysts within and outside the Arab world have looked closely at the facts on the ground. At the Doha debates held in mid-January 2012 at Boğazici University, some warned the emerging Arab democracies against emulating Turkey, which was described as “a bad model” because of Ankara’s record on human rights and media freedom. German Marshall Fund fellow Hassan Mneimneh cautioned that the Turkish model could become “a cover for the insertion of Islamism into positions of power where the Islamists would be really entrenched in the Arab world.”⁴² Egyptian academic Ibrahim Ghanem maintained that many Arabs were now taking a closer, more skeptical look at the Turkish model: “What is the meaning of ‘Turkish model’? Do you mean in dealing with minorities like Alevis and Kurds? Do you mean the Turkish model in terms of the vital role of the army in the political life?”⁴³

The Turkish model has now begun to look less attractive to potential audiences with the harshest criticism coming from Turkish journalists on Ankara’s abuse of freedoms and drift away from democracy. The latest wave of arrests of Turkish journalists at the end of 2011 moved *Milliyet* columnist Mehmet Tezkan to

write: “In a political structure where the head of internal security forces ... perceives writers as ‘pens for sale,’ not even a halfway democracy, let alone an advanced democracy, is possible.”⁴⁴ Aslı Aydıntaşbaş commented that the political dynamic was developing in a direction that was totally opposite to what the AKP had promised “with the object of subduing the 50 percent of the population who did not vote for the AKP, instead of satisfying the other 50 percent’s demand for democratic change.”⁴⁵ Mehmet Ali Birand cautioned that arresting journalists, thinkers, and political staff because they were sympathizers of the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) was “nothing more than forcefully silencing millions of people”⁴⁶ while Semih Idiz complained that the arrests were legal “witch hunts” against anyone considered disagreeable from an AKP perspective.⁴⁷ Taha Akyol warned against damaging the credibility of the judicial process in Turkey, maintaining that there have been “excessive arrests” which cast a shadow over the rightful nature of the court cases and undermined their credibility.⁴⁸

It is indeed ironic that at the very time that Turkey sought to cast itself as a model of democratization, its own democracy was tottering with ninety journalists⁴⁹

and thousands of Kurdish activists or supporters under arrest or in prison.⁵⁰ Writing in the *Milliyet*, journalist Sami Kohen accused the West of indifference toward the negative developments in Turkey, maintaining that what was taking place was “casting a shadow

Some Arab analysts consider Turkey “a bad model” because of its record on human rights and media freedom.

40 Al-Arabiya News Channel (Dubai), Sept. 14, 2011.

41 *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Jan. 17, 2012.

42 *Gulf Times* (Doha), Jan. 17, 2012; The Doha Debates, at Boğazici University, Istanbul, Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, Jan. 12, 2012.

43 National Public Radio, Jan. 6, 2012.

44 *Milliyet* (Istanbul), Jan. 12, 2011, in *Mideast Mirror*, Jan. 12, 2012.

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Hürriyet* (Istanbul), Jan. 24, 2012.

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*, Jan. 12, 2011, in *Mideast Mirror*, Jan. 12, 2012.

49 Mehmet Ali Birand, *Posta* (Istanbul), Jan. 11, 2012, in *Mideast Mirror*, Jan. 11, 2012.

50 *Yeni Özgür Politika* (Frankfurt), Jan. 8, 2012.

over the ‘Turkish model’ for the Middle East.”⁵¹ For her part, blogger Yesim Erez maintained that

during the last year, Western governments and mass media have urged new, post-revolutionary Arab governments to follow the “Turkish model” as a way of achieving a moderate democracy. The problem with this approach is that the Turkish model is not so moderate, democratic, or admirable.⁵²

Sunni-majority Arab states seem disinclined to embrace a model that empowers new forces such as Shiites or Kurds.

For all of Ankara’s efforts to extol the virtues of and to export its brand of democracy, the Turkish model does not seem to have made much headway in the Middle East. Arab elites remain reserved and suspicious because they fear Turkish ambitions in the region; emerging Islamist

parties are wary because Turkey is too secular and too Western despite its AKP government; liberals are skeptical about Turkish democracy, and Arab states are searching for their own authentic, homegrown models to take into account the specific characteristics of each country.

CONCLUSIONS

Neither the Iraqi nor Turkish models have proven attractive to the Arab regimes emerging from the most recent unrest. The Iraqi model seems more frightening than encouraging, in part because it is perceived as a foreign imposition and in part because of the civil strife that was unleashed on its heels. Sunni-majority Arab states seem disinclined to embrace a model that

empowers new forces such as Shiites or Kurds, especially when they have their own minorities—Copts, Berbers, or Shiites, among others—with which to contend.

For all the admiration that it had initially aroused, the Turkish model appears as unappealing as the Iraqi but for different reasons. Despite the fact that Turkey is a Muslim country, there are lingering fears and suspicions among the new regimes regarding Ankara’s real motives. The export of the Turkish model has been perceived as another vehicle for expanding Ankara’s neo-Ottoman ambitions in the region. To some, Ankara’s behavior seems arrogant as if it were lecturing the uncultured Arabs who need to be schooled by the “superior” Turks. From this perspective, there is little difference between a Christian or Muslim outsider.

The overwhelming sense is that each country affected by the unrest is searching for its own model and is unwilling to emulate another even when it has proved successful. A democratic system cannot be instantly copied and installed in another place. It needs time, a strong economic basis, stability, and most importantly, the willingness of a large segment of the society to embrace democratic norms. As Daniel Pipes has written: “Democracy is a learned habit, not instinct. The infrastructure of a civil society—such as freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, the rule of law, minority rights, and an independent judiciary—needs to be established before holding elections. Deep attitudinal changes must take place as well: a culture of restraint, a commonality of values, a respect for differences of view and a sense of civic responsibility.”⁵³

As of now, it seems highly doubtful that either Iraq or Turkey can help the post-revolutionary Arab regimes implement these conditions.



51 *Milliyet*, Jan. 10, 2012, in *Mideast Mirror*, Jan. 13, 2012.

52 Yesim Erez, “The ‘Turkish Model’ of Democracy: Neither Moderate nor Democratic,” *PJ Media*, Feb. 1, 2012.

53 Daniel Pipes, “A Strongman for Iraq?” *The New York Post*, Apr. 28, 2003.

Iran Courts Latin America

by Ilan Berman

In October 2011, U.S. attorney general Eric Holder and FBI director Robert Mueller revealed the thwarting of an elaborate plot by elements in Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to Washington at a posh D.C. eatery, utilizing members of the Los Zetas Mexican drug cartel.¹

The foiled terrorist plot, with its Latin American connections, focused new attention on what had until then been a largely overlooked political phenomenon: the intrusion of the Islamic Republic of Iran into the Western Hemisphere. An examination of Tehran's behavioral pattern in the region over the past several years reveals four distinct strategic objectives: loosening the U.S.-led international noose to prevent it from building nuclear weapons; obtaining vital resources for its nuclear project; creating informal networks for influence projection and sanctions evasion; and establishing a terror infrastructure that could target the U.S. homeland.

BUILDING WESTERN HEMISPHERE ALLIANCES

Outreach to Latin America is seen by the Iranian regime first and foremost as a means to lessen its deepening international isolation. Since 2003, when its previously clandestine nuclear program became a pressing international issue, Tehran has sought to mitigate the mounting political and economic restrictions levied against it by the United States and its allies through intensified diplomatic outreach abroad.

Due to its favorable geopolitical climate—typified by vast ungoverned areas and wide-

spread anti-Americanism—Latin America has become an important focus of this effort. Over the past decade, the regime has nearly doubled the number of embassies in the region (from six in 2005 to ten in 2010) and has devoted considerable energy to forging economic bonds with sympathetic regional governments.²

Far and away the most prominent such partnership has been with Venezuela. Since Hugo Chavez became president in 1999, alignment with Tehran has emerged as a cardinal tenet of Caracas's foreign policy. The subsequent election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the Iranian presidency in 2005 kicked cooperation into high gear with dramatic results. Today, the two countries enjoy an extensive and vibrant strategic partnership. Venezuela has emerged as an impor-

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1 *The New York Times*, Oct. 11, 2011.

2 Gen. Douglas M. Fraser, statement before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, Washington, D.C., Mar. 30, 2011.

tant source of material assistance for Tehran's sprawling nuclear program as well as a vocal diplomatic backer of its right to atomic power.³ The Chavez regime also has become a safe haven and source of financial support for Hezbollah, Iran's most powerful terrorist proxy.⁴ In turn, Tehran's feared Revolutionary Guard has become involved in training Venezuela's secret services and police.⁵ Economic contacts between Caracas and

Tehran's Revolutionary Guard is involved in training Venezuela's secret services and police.

Tehran likewise have exploded—expanding from virtually nil in the early 2000s to more than \$20 billion in total trade and cooperation agreements today.⁶

Just as significantly, Venezuela has served as Iran's gateway for further economic and diplomatic expansion into the region. Aided by its partnership with Caracas and

bolstered by a shared anti-American outlook, Tehran has succeeded in forging significant strategic, economic, and political links with the regime of Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador. Even Iran's relations with Argentina, where Iranian-supported terrorists carried out major bombings in 1992 and 1994, have improved in recent times, as the government of President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner has hewed a more conciliatory line toward Tehran.⁷

It would be a mistake, however, to view these contacts as simply pragmatic—or strictly defensive. The Iranian regime's sustained systematic outreach to regional states suggests that it sees the Western Hemisphere as a crucial strategic theater for expanding its own influence and re-

ducing that of the United States. Indeed, a 2009 dossier prepared by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that "since Ahmadinejad's rise to power, Tehran has been promoting an aggressive policy aimed at bolstering its ties with Latin American countries with the declared goal of 'bringing America to its knees.'"⁸ This view is increasingly shared by the U.S. military: In its 2010 report on Iranian military power, the Office of the Secretary of Defense noted that "Iran seeks to increase its stature by countering U.S. influence and expanding ties with regional actors" in Latin America.⁹

To this end, Tehran is ramping up its strategic messaging to the region. In late January, on the heels of Ahmadinejad's very public four-country tour of Latin America, the Iranian regime formally launched HispanTV, a Spanish-language analogue to its English-language Press TV channel.¹⁰ The television outlet has been depicted by Ahmadinejad as part of his government's efforts to "limit the ground for supremacy of dominance seekers"—a thinly-veiled reference to U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere.¹¹

As Ahmadinejad's statement indicates, Tehran is pursuing a strategy that promotes its own ideology and influence in Latin America at Washington's expense. In this endeavor, it has been greatly aided by Chavez, who himself has worked diligently to diminish U.S. political and economic presence in the region under the banner of a new "Bolivarian" revolution.

EXPLOITING RESOURCE WEALTH

Since the start of the international crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions nearly nine years

3 *China Central TV* (Beijing), Jan. 10, 2012.

4 *The Washington Times*, July 7, 2008.

5 Agence France-Presse, Dec. 21, 2008.

6 See, for example, Steven Heydemann, "Iran's Alternative Allies," in Robin Wright, ed., *The Iran Primer: Power, Politics and U.S. Policy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010).

7 Reuters, Dec. 5, 2011.

8 *YNet News* (Tel Aviv), May 25, 2009.

9 "Unclassified Report on Military Power of Iran," U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C., Apr. 2010.

10 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (Washington, D.C.), Jan. 31, 2012.

11 *Arab News* (Riyadh), Feb. 1, 2012.

ago, it has become an accepted belief that Tehran's atomic program is now largely self-sufficient and that its progress is, therefore, largely inexorable. This, however, is far from the truth; in fact, the Iranian regime currently runs a considerable, and growing, deficit of uranium ore, the critical raw material needed to fuel its atomic effort.

According to nonproliferation experts, Tehran's indigenous uranium ore reserves are known to be both "limited and mostly of poor quality."¹² When Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi mapped out an ambitious national plan for nuclear power in the 1970s, his government was forced to procure significant quantities of the mineral from South Africa. Nearly four decades later, this aging stockpile has reportedly been mostly depleted.¹³ As a result, in recent years, Tehran has embarked on a widening quest to acquire uranium ore from abroad. In 2009, for example, it is known to have attempted to purchase more than 1,000 tons of uranium ore from the Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan at a cost of nearly half-a-billion dollars.¹⁴ In that particular case, deft diplomacy on the part of Washington and its European allies helped stymie Tehran's efforts—at least for the time being.

The Iranian quest, however, has not abated. In February 2011, an intelligence summary from a member state of the International Atomic Energy Agency reaffirmed the Islamic regime's continued search for new and stable sources of uranium to fuel its nuclear program.¹⁵ This effort has recently focused on two principal geographic areas. The first is Africa where Tehran has made concerted efforts to engage a number of uranium producers such as Zimbabwe, Senegal, Nigeria, and the Democratic People's Republic of Congo.¹⁶ The second is Latin America where Tehran now is ex-



Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (left) embraces his closest ally in the Americas, Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. Venezuela, located on the northern coast of South America, has become the focal point for Iran's ambitions in the Western hemisphere.

ploring and developing a series of significant resource partnerships.

The best known of these partnerships is with Venezuela; cooperation on strategic resources has emerged as a defining feature of the alliance between the Islamic Republic and the Chavez regime. The Iranian regime is currently known to be mining in the Roraima Basin, adjacent to Venezuela's border with Guyana. Significantly, that geological area is believed to be analogous to Canada's Athabasca Basin, the world's largest deposit of uranium.¹⁷

Bolivia, too, is fast becoming a significant source of strategic resources for the Iranian regime. With the sanction of the Morales government, Tehran is now believed to be extracting uranium from as many as eleven different sites in Bolivia's east, proximate to the country's in-

12 Associated Press, Feb. 24, 2011.

13 *Time*, Apr. 27, 2010.

14 Associated Press, Dec. 29, 2009.

15 *Ibid.*, Feb. 24, 2011.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Bret Stephens, "The Tehran-Caracas Nuclear Axis," *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 15, 2009.



Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (left) hosted an Iftar (fast breaking) ceremony on Ramadan in Tehran, September 3, 2009, which was attended by Bolivian president Evo Morales (right) during a two-day official visit. Tehran is now believed to be extracting uranium from as many as eleven different sites in Bolivia close to the country's industrial capital of Santa Cruz.

Regional experts note that Iran's mining and extraction efforts in Latin America are still comparatively modest in nature, constrained by competition from larger countries such as Canada and China and by Tehran's own available resources and know-how.²² However, the region is unquestionably viewed as a target of opportunity in Iran's widening quest for strategic resources—both because of its favorable political operating environment and because states there (especially Bolivia) represent unknown quantities in terms of resource wealth. This raises the possibility that Latin America could emerge in the near future as a significant provider of strategic resources for the Iranian regime and a key source of sustenance for Iran's expanding nuclear program.

dustrial capital of Santa Cruz.¹⁸ Not coincidentally, it is rumored that the now-infamous Tehran-Caracas air route operated jointly by Conviasa, Venezuela's national airline, and Iran's state carrier, Iran Air, will be extended in the near future to Santa Cruz.¹⁹ Additionally, a series of cooperation agreements concluded in 2010 between La Paz and Tehran have made Iran a "partner" in the mining and exploitation of Bolivia's lithium, a key strategic mineral with applications for nuclear weapons development.²⁰

Iran even appears to be eyeing Ecuador's uranium deposits. A \$30 million joint mining deal concluded between Tehran and Quito back in 2009 has positioned the Correa regime to eventually become a supplier for the Islamic Republic.²¹

ESTABLISHING AN IRANIAN PRESENCE

Tehran's formal political and economic contacts with regional states are reinforced by a broad web of asymmetric activities throughout the Americas. Illicit financial transactions figure prominently in this regard. Over the past several years, Tehran's economic ties with Caracas have helped it skirt the sanctions being levied by the international community as well as to continue to operate in an increasingly inhospitable global financial system. It has done so through the establishment of joint companies and financial entities as well as the formation of wholly Iranian-owned financial entities in Venezuela and the entrenchment of Iranian commercial banks there.²³ Experts note that this financial activity

18 Author interviews, La Paz, Bolivia, Jan. 23-25, 2012.

19 Author interviews, Santiago, Chile, Jan. 20-21, 2012.

20 *MercoPress* (Montevideo, Ury.), Oct. 30, 2010.

21 "Memorando De Entendimiento Entre El Ministerio De Minas Y Petroleos De La Republica Del Ecuador Y El Ministerio De Industrias Y Minería De La Republica Islamica De Iran En El Sector Geologico Minero," Dec. 3, 2009.

22 Author interviews, Santiago, Chile, Jan. 20, 2012.

23 See, for example, Norman A. Bailey, "Iran's Venezuelan Gateway," *Iran Strategy Brief*, no. 5, American Foreign Policy Council, Washington, D.C., Feb. 12, 2012.

exploits an existing loophole in the current sanctions regime against Tehran—one that leverages the freedom of action of Venezuelan banks to provide the Islamic Republic with “an ancillary avenue through which it can access the international financial system despite Western pressure.”²⁴

Tehran is also known to be active in the region’s ubiquitous gray and black markets as well as its free trade areas—operating both directly and via its terrorist proxy Hezbollah.²⁵ Most notoriously, these include the so-called “Triple Frontier” at the crossroads of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil as well as Venezuela’s Margarita Island.

The Iranians also boast an increasingly robust paramilitary presence in the region. The Pentagon, in its 2010 report to Congress on Iran’s military power, noted that the Qods Force, the Revolutionary Guard’s elite paramilitary unit, is now deeply involved in the Americas, stationing “operatives in foreign embassies, charities and religious/cultural institutions to foster relationships with people, often building on existing socioeconomic ties with the well-established Shia Diaspora” and even carrying out “paramilitary operations to support extremists and destabilize unfriendly regimes.”²⁶

This presence is most pronounced in Bolivia. Tehran has been intimately involved in the activities of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) since the formation of that Cuban- and Venezuelan-led geopolitical bloc—which also encompasses Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and a number of other nations—in the early



The long arm of Iran’s terror network became apparent in October 2011 with the announcement that U.S. authorities had thwarted an assassination plot by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard against the Saudi ambassador to Washington. The attempt was set to use members of the Los Zetas Mexican drug cartel. A display in Mexico of captured members and their armaments provides chilling proof of their lethality.

2000s. As part of that relationship, Tehran reportedly provided at least some of the seed money for the establishment of the bloc’s regional defense school situated outside Santa Cruz. Iranian defense minister Ahmad Vahidi reportedly presided over the school’s inauguration in May 2011, and Iran—an ALBA observer nation—is now said to be playing a role in training and indoctrination at the facility.²⁷ Regional officials currently estimate between fifty and three hundred Iranian trainers to be present in Bolivia.²⁸ Notably, however, a personal visit to the facility by this author in January 2012 found it to be largely unattended.

A BASE FOR ATTACK?

Conventional wisdom in Washington has long held that Tehran’s activism in the Americas

24 Ibid.

25 Rex Hudson, “Terror and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of South America,” Library of Congress, Federal Research Div., Washington, D.C., Dec. 2010; “Unclassified Report on Military Power of Iran,” Apr. 2010.

26 “Unclassified Report on Military Power of Iran,” Apr. 2010.

27 Author interviews, Santiago, Chile, and La Paz, Bol., Jan. 20–24, 2012.

28 Author interviews, Santiago, Chile, Jan. 20, 2012.



In January 2012, the Iranian regime formally launched HispanTV, a Spanish-language television outlet that will broadcast Iran's revolutionary, Islamic message in the Americas.

is opportunistic—rather than operational. Yet Iran's growing asymmetric capabilities throughout the region have the potential to be directed against the U.S. homeland. This was hammered home by the foiled October 2011 plot, an attack which—had it been successful—would potentially have killed scores of U.S. citizens in the nation's capital in the most significant terrorist event since 9/11.

The incident represents a seismic shift in Tehran's strategic calculations. As Director of National Intelligence James Clapper observed in his January 2012 testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, in response to mounting international pressure and asymmetric activity against Tehran's nuclear program, it appears that "Iranian officials—probably including Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i—have changed their calculus and are now willing to conduct an attack in the United States."²⁹

Latin America figures prominently in this equation. The foiled October 2011 plot suggests that Tehran increasingly deems the region an

advantageous operational theater. Moreover, as its influence and activities there intensify, the Iranian regime will be able to field a progressively more robust operational presence in the Americas. Clapper concluded his Senate testimony with an ominous warning: "The Iranian regime has formed alliances with Chavez, Ortega, Castro, and Correa that many believe can destabilize the hemisphere," he noted. "These alliances can pose an immediate threat by giving Iran—directly through the IRGC, the Qods force, or its proxies like Hezbollah—a platform in the region to carry out attacks against the United States, our interests, and allies."³⁰

OBSTACLES FACING IRAN

Understanding these motivations is essential to assessing the significance of Latin America in Tehran's strategic calculus and to determining whether its efforts there are successful.

For the moment, Iranian regional inroads represent a work in progress. The Islamist regime has demonstrated a clear interest in Latin America over the past decade and is now striving to expand its influence there. As of yet, however, it has not succeeded in solidifying this presence—or in fully operationalizing its regional relationships and institutionalizing its influence. As experts have noted, despite Tehran's generous promises of economic engagement with regional states, precious little of this aid has actually materialized, save in the case of Venezuela.³¹ Moreover, despite increasingly robust cooperation with regional states on mining and extraction, there is as yet no indication that Latin America by itself can serve as the answer for Iran's strategic resource needs.

Furthermore, an expansion of Tehran's footprint in the region is not necessarily inevitable.

29 James Clapper, testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, D.C., Jan. 31, 2012.

30 Ibid.

31 Bailey, "Iran's Venezuelan Gateway."

Over the past year, the health of the Islamic Republic's foremost regional ally, Hugo Chavez, has become increasingly critical, and the Venezuelan strongman is now believed to be in the terminal stages of cancer. Significant ambiguity abounds over Venezuela's future direction and, as a result, about the durability of the partnership forged between Caracas and Tehran under Chavez.

Tehran's expanding regional activism, therefore, can be understood at least in part as contingency planning of sorts: an effort to broaden contacts and ensure the continuance of its regional influence in a post-Chavez environment. In this context, the regimes of Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador are significant with Correa in particular increasingly considered a potential successor to Chavez as a standard bearer of the new "Bolivarianism"—and an inheritor of cooperation with Iran.³² Tehran's future progress in solidifying and expanding those partnerships will serve as an important barometer of the long-term survival of its

bonds to the region as a whole.

For their part, since October 2011, policymakers in Washington have begun to pay serious attention to Tehran's activities in the Western Hemisphere. Yet they have done little concrete to respond to it, at least so far. Despite heartening early steps (including new legislation now under consideration by Congress),³³ a comprehensive strategy to contest and dilute Iranian influence in the Americas remains absent.

Unless and until such a strategy does emerge, Tehran's Latin American efforts—and the threats posed by them to American interests and the U.S. homeland—will only continue to expand.

A comprehensive strategy in Washington to contest and dilute Iranian influence in the Americas is absent.



32 Jose R. Cardenas, "Iran's Man in Ecuador," *Foreign Policy*, Feb. 15, 2011.

33 *Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act of 2012*, H.R. 3783, 112th U.S. Congress, 2d sess., Washington, D.C., Jan. 18, 2012.

In the Name of Honor

Palestinian police have freed a young woman whose father kept her locked in the bathroom of their house for about a decade. Spokesman Adnan Damiri said the 20-year-old woman was in a "deplorable" condition when she was found on Saturday.

Baraa Melhem revealed that she spent the decade by listening to the radio that her father had given her and by eating an apple that she got to eat every day.

Her father locked her up in the bathroom after she ran away from home to escape the torture at the age of 10. The police caught her and brought her back home.

She would be allowed to get out of the bathroom only in the middle of the night so that she could do the house work. She would be locked inside again around dawn. She did not see any sunlight for about a decade.

Baraa was given only a blanket, radio, and a razor blade by her father and stepmother, and both of them encouraged her to kill herself, the daily said. The girl was often physically assaulted, and her father would shave her head and eyebrows to punish her further.

He would often threaten to rape her till she got pregnant so that he could kill her in the name of honor killing.

Emirates 24/7 (Dubai), Jan. 24, 2012

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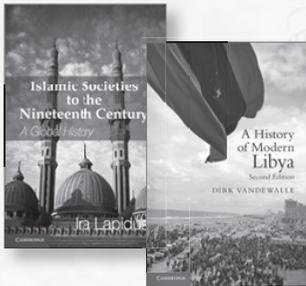
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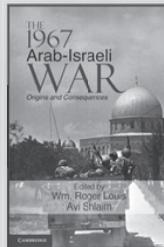
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The Arab League Comes Alive

by Bruce Maddy-Weitzman

One unexpected result of the Arab upheavals has been the renewed relevance of the 22-member League of Arab States. Long denigrated as a largely toothless organization, “a cross between the forces of fiction and futility,”¹ the league became an integral part of the diplomatic maneuvering in a number of areas. It provided crucial legitimacy for the Western intervention that led to the overthrow of Mu‘ammar al-Qaddafi, supported the Gulf Cooperation Council’s ultimately successful effort to force Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh to relinquish power, and has been active in trying to resolve the Syrian crisis.

Why the change? On one level, most ruling Arab elites, cognizant of the widespread sympathy for the protest movements, find it necessary and useful to demonstrate their attentiveness to the public mood, at least when it comes to supporting protest movements elsewhere. But at base, the league’s actions have been not so much a result of the “Tahrir spirit” as of the hardheaded, geopolitical calculations by the bloc of mostly monarchical Sunni Arab states headed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Its successes, and limitations, provide a window into the current state of inter-Arab and regional dynamics at a time of great uncertainty.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The league was founded in March 1945 to promote closer political and economic cooperation between newly emerging Arabic-speaking states in the name of an overarching pan-Arab identity; but the organization has generally failed to achieve anything more than ad hoc collaboration between its members, and the bulk of its resolutions and decisions have not been implemented. The deep fissures and rivalries among the Arab states, as well as the limitations on the capabili-

ties of Egypt, the driving force of the new organization, insured that the league would fail to develop a strong institutional framework. The inability to require recalcitrant members to accept the will of the majority generally necessitated the search for the lowest common denominator, thus invariably watering down the league’s resolutions and often denuding them of meaning entirely. For much of its history, the league, headquartered in Cairo and perpetually headed by a senior Egyptian diplomat, served as an appendage of Egyptian foreign policy and a tool to promote Egypt’s self-designated status as the leader of the Arab world.

Nonetheless, Arab League summit confer-

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1 Rami G. Khouri, “The Arab League Awakening,” *Agence Global* (Greensboro, N.C.), Nov. 16, 2011.

ences—the league’s de facto supreme decision-making body—have occasionally produced significant outcomes: the 1964 creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its endorsement as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people ten years later; the 1978 suspension of Egypt following its peace accords with Israel; and, perhaps most importantly, the 1990 condemnation by a bare majority of Arab states

The Arab League created the PLO and endorsed it as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

of Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait and support for the U.S.-led military coalition that would ultimately evict him from the emirate.

Over the past decade, Arab summit conferences faded into irrelevance. This was particularly visible at the 2004 summit hosted by Tunisia’s autocratic president Ben Ali, which proclaimed a com-

mitment to comprehensive reform of political life, including the establishment of genuine democracy and freedom of expression, thought and belief.² The Arab regimes’ inability and unwillingness even to begin a process of genuine reform provided an important backdrop to the 2011 uprisings. Meanwhile, the centers of power in the Middle East were ever more firmly located in non-Arab capitals—Ankara, Tehran, and Jerusalem.

FROM TUNIS TO TRIPOLI

The gathering storm in Tunisia rendered most Arab leaders speechless, apart from Qaddafi, who expressed the hope that Ben Ali would succeed in restoring order. Momentarily, the Libyan dictator was on the same side of the fence as the conservative Arab monarchies led by Saudi Arabia as well as the Egyptian and Algerian ruling elites. But this would not last.

As the protest movements spread, the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) quickly emerged as the only cohesive bloc of Arab states. Having banded together in 1981 in the shadow of the Iran-Iraq war, this club of pro-Western, oil-rich, tribally-based, geopolitically vulnerable monarchies has generally been like-minded on major strategic issues while not being free of differences and rivalries, due particularly to the gadfly role embraced by Qatar. In this regard, the Doha-based al-Jazeera TV’s constant coverage of the protests in Tunis and Cairo was crucial in building their momentum to the extreme displeasure of Riyadh. For the Saudi leadership, the toppling of Ben Ali, to whom it quickly gave asylum, was bad enough. The overthrow three weeks later of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, the Saudis’ prime regional ally for more than twenty years, shook them profoundly, all the more so in light of what they viewed as the Obama administration’s failure to stand firmly behind him.³ The GCC states’ response was multi-pronged, focusing on the next three emerging hot spots—Bahrain, Libya, and Yemen—while concurrently pumping billions of dollars into their own societies to neutralize potential unrest.

Bahrain, of course, was one of their own, a member of the club. Unlike the others, however, it had a marginalized Shiite majority. Hence, the Saudis viewed the unrest there not through the lens of civic assertion, as it was seen in the West, but rather as a religious-communal struggle with potential to inflame the Saudis’ own Shiite population in the kingdom’s Eastern Province.⁴ Moreover, the Bahrain crisis also carried profound geopolitical ramifications: Periodic Iranian claims to Bahrain and Tehran’s vocal support for the Bahraini protestors posed a mortal danger in Saudi eyes—the extension of Iranian power and influence across the Persian Gulf and onto the peninsula itself.⁵

3 *Fox News*, Feb. 10, 2011; *The New York Times*, Mar. 17, 2011.

4 Reuters, Feb. 22, 2011; *The New York Times*, Mar. 17, 2011; *The Guardian* (London), Mar. 19, 2011.

5 *Voice of America News* (Washington, D.C.), Mar. 17, 2011; *The New York Times*, Mar. 17, 2011.

2 “League of Arab States, Tunis Declaration issued at the 16th session of the Arab Summit,” Tunis, May 22-23, 2004.

Hence, for GCC members, the choice was clear. Blatantly ignoring Washington's advice to engage with the protestors' demands, Bahrain's King Hamad welcomed the deployment in March 2011 of approximately a thousand mostly Saudi armed forces together with smaller contingents from other GCC states. Their presence gave him sufficient backing to crack down hard on the protests, bringing them to an end.

Whereas the purpose of the GCC's Bahrain policy was to restore the status quo, stabilizing Yemen—Saudi Arabia's soft underbelly on its southeast border—necessitated delicate mediation over many months. The end result, the removal of Saleh and his replacement by his vice president, was the optimal outcome for the time being.

Libya, however, was another story. As opposed to intervening to preserve the status quo as in Bahrain, or to brokering a leadership change while maintaining the regime as in Yemen, the GCC's goal in Libya was to demolish Qaddafi's personal rule. The Libyan ruler had never made any bones about his disdain for the gulf monarchies: His media had branded the late Saudi King Fahd the "pig of the peninsula," and Qaddafi and Saudi King Abdullah had exchanged personal invectives on a number of occasions in recent years at Arab summits, in front of the television cameras.⁶ Sensitive to charges that ruling elites, and especially conservative pro-Western Arab monarchies, were opposed to the demands for reform from Arab societies, Arab monarchs consequently jumped at the chance to support the Libyan uprising.

Of course, the challenge of toppling Qaddafi was of an entirely different order of business than



Saudi Arabian sheikh Yusuf Yassin (center), the acting minister for foreign affairs, signs the League of Arab States charter in Cairo, Egypt, March 1945. The Arab League was inaugurated ostensibly to promote greater inter-Arab cooperation, but in reality, it was created largely in opposition to the Zionist enterprise in Mandate Palestine. Its influence has waxed and waned over the decades; its accomplishments have been few and far between.

in Bahrain or Yemen. At best, the GCC states could only play a supporting role, and the heavy lifting could be done only by Western powers and the Libyan opposition itself. To that end, Saudi Arabia and Qatar activated the Arab League, a matter of no small irony, as Qaddafi had hosted the annual Arab summit conference in his home town of Sirte just one year earlier.

Accordingly, on February 22, 2011, the league condemned the Libya government's violent crackdown of the protestors and suspended it from participation in league meetings.⁷ This marked the first occasion when a league member had been barred due to actions taken against its own citizens within its sovereign territory, and it portended further measures. On March 12, as Qaddafi threatened to reconquer the rebellious eastern

6 See, for example, *The Telegraph* (London), Mar. 30, 2009.

7 Reuters, Feb. 22, 2011; Bloomberg News Service (New York), Feb. 22, 2011.

region of the country and hunt down his opponents “like rats,” Doha and Riyadh spearheaded an Arab League resolution calling on the U.N. Security Council to impose a no-fly zone to protect Libyan civilians from Qaddafi’s promised retributions.⁸ Reminiscent of the 1990 Arab

During the upheavals, it was the Gulf Cooperation Council bloc that held the decisive weight in the Arab League.

summit’s action against Saddam Hussein, the league’s appeal to the Security Council provided vital Arab legitimacy for Western governments’ subsequent actions. One difference between the two episodes was that, in 1990, much of the Arab “street” was infuriated with the move. This time, the “street” and the considerations of most

governments had converged. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates would even provide small contingents from their respective air forces to participate in the NATO-led attacks on Qaddafi’s forces,⁹ and the two countries, along with Kuwait, recognized the rebels’ Transitional Council as the legitimate Libyan government well before Qaddafi’s ultimate capture and summary execution on October 20, 2011.

To be sure, one could hardly speak of a large, activist anti-Qaddafi Arab bloc. Only five other countries besides the six GCC states actually attended the league meeting—only half of the total member states. Nor was support for the U.N. Security Council resolution unanimous: The Syrian and Algerian foreign ministers,¹⁰ and reportedly the Sudanese and Mauritanian ones as well, expressed their unhappiness about endorsing international intervention in Libya’s internal affairs and warned of the consequences. Indeed, outgoing league secretary-general Amr Moussa backtracked on the league’s decision just a few days

later¹¹ as it became clear that NATO’s mission was not just humanitarian but ultimately directed at achieving a regime change. But Moussa’s statement had no discernible impact on the course of events, confirming anew that it was the GCC bloc that held the decisive weight in the league at that moment, and that NATO and the GCC, having attained what they needed from the league mechanism, could proceed apace.

THE STRUGGLE FOR SYRIA REDUX

During its first decades of existence, Syria was a weak state that suffered from chronic political instability, internal schisms, and a lack of cohesion. As such, it was the object of rival regional and international ambitions which, in turn, further destabilized domestic political life. This weakness stood in contrast to Damascus’s claim to regional leadership as the “beating heart of Arabism,” used by Syrian leaders as a legitimating tool vis-à-vis both domestic and regional rivals. The outcome of this explosive cocktail was the 1967 Six-Day War with Israel, the final blow to the dream of radical pan-Arabists.¹²

Hafez Assad’s ascent to power in 1970 gradually inaugurated a new era. Syria became a brutal, albeit relatively stable *mukhabarat* (intelligence and security services) state with its leaders indulged and all opposition crushed as in Hama in 1982. Systematic repression was accompanied by alliances between the Alawite core of the regime, the Sunni merchant classes, and the Christian religious minorities, who valued the stability provided by the regime. Regionally, Syria became a full-fledged actor, incorporating Lebanon into its sphere of influence and seeking to do the same with the Palestinians and Jordan while maintaining a hard-line position toward Israel. While Damascus continued to declare adherence to the principles of Arab nationalism, its alliance with non-

8 U.N. press release on resolution 1973, Mar. 17, 2011.

9 Christopher M. Blanchard, “Libya: Unrest and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., Mar. 29, 2011.

10 *BBC News*, Mar. 12, 2011.

11 France 24 TV, Mar. 22, 2011.

12 Curtis Ryan, “The New Arab Cold War and the Struggle for Syria,” *Middle East Report*, no. 262, Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), Washington, D.C.

Arab revolutionary Islamist Iran beginning in 1979 placed it in an awkward, minority position among Arab states, particularly during the Iran-Iraq war. But the alliance, often viewed by outsiders as unholy and unnatural, proved to be extremely durable even as Syria joined the pragmatic pro-Western Arab camp led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia in helping to reverse the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91 and participated in the Arab-Israeli peace process during the 1990s.

Under Bashar al-Assad, however, the delicate balance that his father had usually maintained between Iran and conserva-

tive, pro-Western Arab states was abandoned in favor of deeper ties with Tehran and enhanced support for non-state violent Islamist movements (Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad). Even as he officially subscribed to the Arab League's 2002 peace initiative, Bashar was dismissive of it and of its Arab advocates.¹³ Syrian relations with other Arab states reached a new low point during the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war when Bashar scorned Mubarak and the Saudi and Jordanian kings as "half men" for blaming Hezbollah and Iran for starting the conflagration.¹⁴ It was largely thanks to the Syrian-Iranian alliance that Tehran was able to project power into the eastern Mediterranean region—in Lebanon, the Damascus-based Palestinian organizations, and the Egyptian Sinai—in a manner unprecedented since ancient times.

Following the uprising in Tunisia and in the midst of the protests in Egypt and Bahrain, Bashar gave a memorable interview to *The Wall Street*



Arab League monitors visit a site in Syria, January 2012. With much of the Arab world in disarray and Middle East power centers apparently shifting to Ankara, Tehran, and Jerusalem, it would seem that displays of Arab unity amount to little. Both an Arab League mediation effort and the Syrian monitoring mission have been exercises in futility.

Journal, in which he explained that Syria was immune from unrest because, unlike elsewhere, his policies were in tune with the Syrian people's desire to promote "resistance."¹⁵ Within a few short weeks, however, this gloating proved to be profoundly misconceived. More than a year and 9,000 fatalities later,¹⁶ Assad's regime is fighting for its life and is estranged to an unprecedented degree from nearly all Arab states. In particular, the conservative Arab monarchies, facing their own restless populations, find it useful to identify with the predominantly Sunni Muslim Syrian opposition. Even more importantly, they recognize that the fall of the house of Assad would be of a different order of magnitude than that of Qaddafi. Having failed for three decades to pry Syria loose from the Iranian embrace, the prospect of regime change, in favor of a Sunni-dominated government more attuned to Saudi, Turkish, Egyptian, and Western sensibilities and interests (not that these are identical, by any means)

13 Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, "Arabs vs. the Abdullah Plan," *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2010, pp. 3-12.

14 Bashar al-Assad, Journalists' Union speech, Damascus, Aug. 15, 2006.

15 *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 31, 2011.

16 *The Telegraph*, Mar. 18, 2012.

is extremely enticing. Tehran recognizes what is at stake as well. A visit in January 2012 of an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps commander to Damascus confirmed that Tehran is providing military aid to Syria to help suppress the uprising. Hezbollah, Iran's main client in the region, is undoubtedly involved in the effort.

THE EVOLVING CRISIS

Many months would pass before the bridges would be entirely burned between Assad and the anti-Iranian, Arab Sunni bloc. Indeed, one of the first acts by the new Arab League secretary-

general Nabil al-Arabi upon officially assuming his post in July 2011, after Moussa stepped down to run for the Egyptian presidency, was to meet Assad in Damascus. There he denounced "foreign intervention" in Syria, and specifically, U.S. president Barack Obama for declaring that

Assad declared that Syria, not the Arab League, had advanced Arab interests politically and culturally.

Assad had lost all legitimacy. At that point in time, a reform process that Assad had pledged to implement appeared to Arabi to be the best hope for avoiding a conflagration in Syria.¹⁷

But the belief in Assad's commitment to reform withered away in subsequent months. A few weeks after condemning Obama, and just one day after a GCC condemnation of the Syrian regime's actions, Arabi issued an official statement expressing concern over the deteriorating situation in Syria and urged the government to end its violent repression of the opposition. On that same day, August 7, Riyadh withdrew its ambassador from Damascus and was followed hours later by Kuwait and Bahrain. Arabi met with Assad on September 10 and left encouraged that the president would act to defuse the crisis. Six weeks later, the scene was repeated, this time by a full-

fledged Arab League mediation mission led by Qatar's prime minister, and including the foreign ministers of Algeria, Egypt, Oman, and Sudan as well as Arabi. The "Arab solution" to the crisis now being proffered put the onus on the Assad regime: It was required to end its violence and killing, release prisoners, withdraw the army from cities, allow free access to foreign journalists, open a dialogue with the opposition under league auspices, and accept the entry of a multinational Arab League monitoring mission which would report on compliance with its plan.¹⁸

Damascus's slowness in responding and efforts to limit the number and purview of the monitors, resulted in its suspension from league activities on November 12, as had been done with Libya.¹⁹ Eighteen states voted in favor of the suspension, with only Lebanon and Yemen opposing and Iraq abstaining. That same day, Jordan's King Abdullah became the first Arab head of state to suggest that Assad should step down. On November 27, the league announced the imposition of sanctions on Syria, including the banning of senior Syrian officials from traveling to other Arab countries, freezing Syrian assets in Arab countries and halting financial operations with major Syrian banks.²⁰ Further sanctions were announced the following week.

While clearly unhappy with the turn of events, the Syrians kept the door opened and eventually agreed to receive an Arab monitoring mission. Its very establishment was a novelty. Syrian forces intervening in Lebanon in 1976 had received the Arab League's qualified stamp of approval. Now, Syria was on the receiving end of collective Arab policies though this was hardly a case of collective Arab will being imposed on Syria. The 165-member mission was led by a retired Sudanese general who had been involved in the genocidal actions in Darfur and was clearly sympathetic to the official Syrian version of events. The regime's efforts to manage the

17 *Al-Ahram* (Cairo), July 13, 2011.

18 *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), Nov. 1, 2011; al-Jazeera TV (Doha), Nov. 3, 2011.

19 *The Guardian*, Nov. 12, 2011.

20 *BBC News*, Nov. 27, 2011.

mission's itinerary apparently included sending prostitutes to the hotel housing the monitors, secretly photographing them in their own rooms and bathrooms, and posting the pictures online in order to blackmail them.²¹ Moreover, a number of monitors were attacked and injured by pro-regime elements. The chaotic nature of the mission led to the very vocal resignation of an Algerian participant, who called it "a farce."²² The 50-strong GCC contingent was demonstratively withdrawn in opposition to extending the mission's activities into a second month, followed quickly by Jordan's withdrawal, and the operation was closed down. Most importantly, the mission had failed to staunch the bloodshed.

Bashar's response to Arab condemnations was predictably dismissive. Much more than them, he declared, it was Syria that represented Arab identity and had advanced Arab interests, politically and culturally. Suspending Syria from the Arab League simply meant that the league had suspended its Arabness. Syria, he insisted, was the victim of an international conspiracy hatched by regional and global powers who, as in the past, wanted to destabilize the country and advance their interests. What passes for the international community, he declared, "is a group of big colonial countries which view the whole world as an arena full of slaves who serve their interests."²³

In response to the mission's failure, the league called for Assad to step down in favor of his vice-president and for the establishment of a national unity government.²⁴ The plan, officially tendered to the Security Council by Morocco, was endorsed by the United States, the European



U.N.-Arab League envoy to Syria Kofi Annan (left) talks with league chief Nabil al-Arabi during a news conference at Arab League headquarters in Cairo, Egypt, March 8, 2012. Arabi must walk a fine line between supporting the sovereignty of Arab states ruled by autocrats such as Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah and responding to the "Arab street's" revulsion with Bashar al-Assad's bloody suppression of the Syrian people.

Union, and Turkey but was vetoed by Russia and China. The veto emboldened the Assad regime to take the offensive to try to stamp out its opponents, employing an updated version of the "Hama Rules." Qatar's emir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani suggested that troops from Arab countries be dispatched to quell the violence; the league called for a joint Arab-U.N. peacekeeping force, and Saudi leaders spoke out forcefully in favor of arming the Syrian opposition. Riyadh's frustration with the absence of action was evidenced by Foreign Minister Sa'ud al-Faisal's very public complaint and demonstrative early exit from the Friends of Syria international conclave, held in Tunisia on February 24, 2012, for the purpose of applying additional pressure on the regime and mobilizing support for the Syrian opposition.²⁵

Failing to achieve a consensual Security Council resolution, the U.N. secretary-general dispatched his predecessor, Kofi Annan, to Dam-

21 Abdul Rahman al-Rashed, "How can we save Syria?" *al-Arabiya News* (Dubai), Jan. 31, 2012.

22 *The Guardian*, Jan. 11, 2012.

23 Bashar al-Assad, speech, Damascus University, Jan. 2012.

24 *The Washington Post*, Jan. 22, 2012.

25 *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 24, 2012.

ascus in early March, as a specially designated U.N.-Arab League representative, to try to find a way out of the impasse but with no discernible results. As Syrian forces extended their offensive and the death toll mounted, league secretary-general Arabi called for an impartial international investigation into “crimes against humanity” com-

mitted against civilians in Syria and prosecution of the perpetrators. The GCC states, for their part, announced the closure of their embassies and called on the international community to “take firm and quick measures to stop the killings, torture, and blatant violation of the dignity of the Syrian people and its legitimate rights.”²⁶

If Ankara is drawn more directly into the Syrian conflict, it may seek some understanding with the Arab League.

CONCLUSIONS

In the many months since the Tunisian produce vendor Mohamed Bouazizi literally and tragically lit the spark that touched off the first of the Arab uprisings, the geopolitical contours in the region continued to be to the Arab states’ collective and individual disadvantage. Egypt, traditionally the first among equals among Arab states, has seen its regional weight and influence decline precipitously in the last two decades. Indeed, one regular refrain of the anti-Mubarak protests was that the president was to blame for this deterioration and that a new order in Egypt would

restore Cairo to its rightful place in the region. So far, however, Egypt has been consumed with internal problems, and its government’s absence from regional issues is even more noticeable.

In its stead, the main Arab leadership roles have been assumed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, a surprising duo given the frequent friction between them generated by Doha’s purposefully independent stand and Riyadh’s own preference for conflict-avoidance and inter-Arab consensus building. But the recent uncertainties, challenges, and opportunities have compelled them to try to maximize their assets. This comes at a time when a nuclear-aspiring Iran poses a clear and present danger to the existing regional balance of power; when Tehran’s primary regional ally, Damascus, is tottering, and when Washington’s dependability appears less of a given to Riyadh. It is against this backdrop that the Arab League has reemerged as an address for regional diplomacy with, perhaps ironically, Western approval.

The Syrian case demonstrates that, despite U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton’s praise of the league’s actions and the hopes of liberal Arabs that the organization could help promote a new well-being for Arab citizens throughout the region,²⁷ the league’s leverage remains limited. Increasingly, it appears that among regional actors, the only one that could tip the balance against the Assad regime would be Turkey. If Ankara is drawn even more directly into the conflict, it may well seek some measure of understanding with the Arab League. Thus, notwithstanding its limitations, the league is more relevant to regional geopolitics than it has been in years.



26 Reuters, Mar. 16, 2012; Day Press News Service (Damascus), Mar. 17, 2012.

27 Marwan Muasher, “A League of Their Own,” *Foreign Policy*, Jan. 11, 2012; Khouri, “The Arab League Awakening.”

Lebanon's Shiite-Maronite Alliance of Hypocrisy

by Hilal Khashan

On February 6, 2006, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah and leader of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) Michel Aoun signed a memorandum of understanding, ostensibly to build a consensual Lebanese democracy on the basis of transparency, justice, and equality.¹ However, a careful examination of the agreement shows that its real goal was the neutralization of Sunni political power, especially after the 2005 assassination of the powerful Sunni statesman and former prime minister Rafiq Hariri.

The memorandum's allusion to limiting the influence of money on politics and combating business and bureaucratic corruption hinted at the Sunni leadership's vast financial and entrepreneurial assets. Conversely, its insistence on the right of Lebanese expatriates to participate in the country's elections sought to enlist the support of the mostly Christian immigrants in the Americas. Similarly, its attempt to link Lebanese national security to Hezbollah's arsenal aimed at legitimizing Shiite militarism.

Little of this had to do with Lebanon as a nation-state as much as with the attempt to preserve Shiite and Maronite power against the perceived Sunni threat. The result was a deeply unequal arrangement that has brought Hezbollah further into Lebanese politics while limiting Maronite options.

SHARED LEGACY OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Neither Lebanon's Shiites nor Maronites felt at home under Ottoman domination, and Sunnis relegated both communities to inferior social status. Both communities found relative freedom in their mountain enclaves although they occasionally suffered from both the ex-

cesses of regional governors who burdened them with taxes and their local feudal leaders who impoverished them and denied them education, especially in the case of the Shiites. The strong Maronite church moderated some of the adverse effects of feudal leadership, mainly because it took it upon itself to contribute to the education of the community, building numerous schools as early as the eighteenth century, especially the famous La Sagesse school in

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¹ *Memorandum of Joint Understanding between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement*, Feb. 6, 2006, *Mideast Monitor*, trans.

The creation of Hezbollah with Iran's help enhanced the Shiite community's political standing within Lebanon.

1875.² The church also played a crucial role in maintaining the cohesion of the community and preparing it for statehood. For example,

Patriarch Elias Huwayik was instrumental in promoting the creation of Greater Lebanon, and in 1919, he travelled to the Versailles Peace Conference to pursue his objective.

The Shiites were less fortunate since they did not have their own religious establishment to take care of basic communal needs. The Sunni Ottoman state did not even recognize a separate communal status for the Shiites. Many Shiite clerics had modest education, and they generally had little impact on the affairs of the community. Shiites had to wait until 1926 to have their own religious court, thanks to the efforts of the French High Commissioner in Lebanon, Auguste Henri Ponsot, who wanted to empower them as a countervailing force to the Sunni community's growing pan-Syrian orientation. The Shiites only won their separate clerical institution in 1969 when Imam Musa Sadr established the Shiite Higher Islamic Council,³ despite Sunni protests.

SLOW SHIITE ENTRY INTO SECTARIAN POLITICS

Under the French Mandate, Lebanon's Sunnis opposed the country's creation in 1920 and continued to demand reunion with Syria until after the Coastal Conference of 1936. During this period, the Maronites came to believe that they needed to foster good relations with the Shiites in order to provide "an ideological alternative to the Sunni-pan-Arab conception of Lebanon."⁴ But the Shiites, who had languished

under feudalism and Ottoman governors, remained quiescent.⁵

The Maronites eventually reached a settlement

with the Sunnis in what became known as the National Covenant of 1943.⁶ Most of the resources of the Lebanese political system were then divided between the Maronites and the Sunnis. The Shiites felt excluded and marginalized, and their sense of dispossession was articulated by Sadr upon his arrival in Lebanon in 1959 with the determination to politicize the Shiite community and to integrate it into the Lebanese political system on a par with the others. His ideas converged with the Maronites' vision for Lebanon, and they saw him as a "rising Muslim leader who readily and unconditionally identified with Lebanese nationalism."⁷

Among Sadr's contributions was the creation of the Amal movement in 1974, whose leader Nabih Berri became the speaker of the Lebanese parliament. Amal was the gateway to Shiite recruitment into the Second Republic after the signing of the Ta'if accords, a compromise brokered by Saudi Arabia and endorsed by the Syrian government, which ended the 15-year Lebanese civil war. Sadr disappeared in Libya in 1978 before he could see the full fruits of his contributions to Lebanese Shiites.

The creation of Hezbollah in 1982 with the help of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps⁸ and the group's military successes against Israel also enhanced the Shiite community's political standing within Lebanon. During the later phases of the Lebanese civil war, Hezbollah allied itself with Syria and was exempted from the general disarmament negoti-

5 Ibid., p. 51.

6 *BBC News*, "Lebanon Profile: A Chronology of Key Events," Jan. 11, 2012.

7 Kamal S. Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976* (Delmar, N.Y.: Carvan, 1976), p. 63.

8 "Terrorism: Hezbollah," International Terrorist Symbols Database, Anti-Defamation League, New York, accessed Mar. 22, 2012.

2 "Un Développement Équilibré," Université La Sagesse, accessed Apr. 2, 2012.

3 Thomas Collelo, ed., "Lebanon's Geography: Islamic Groups," Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Dec. 1987.

4 Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 91.

ated under the 1989 Ta'if accords thanks to the Syrian regime's insistence on labeling it a resistance movement. For several years, Hezbollah chose not to enter fully into the Lebanese political system, but it began to slowly involve itself in local politics as early as the parliamentary elections of 1992.

Hezbollah jumped into national politics in 2005 after Hariri's assassination and the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon in April of that year. At that point, Nasrallah earnestly began to search for a major Maronite ally to help him navigate the turbulence of the country's politics.



Politics makes strange bedfellows as Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah (left), a Shiite, joins Michel Aoun, a Christian Maronite and leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, 2006. The two may detest each other personally but find it convenient to ally themselves against the Sunni Arab population of Lebanon.

FROM SECTARIANISM TO PAN-SHIISM

Southern Lebanese Shiites sought to join the Lebanese state in 1920, but a nation-state mattered little to the Shiite clans in the barren hills of the northern Bekaa Valley. Their feudal and clannish leaders regarded the idea of Lebanon as either ephemeral or secondary. This may help explain why Hezbollah—with its deep commitment to Iran's supreme leader—was born in the Bekaa and not in the south. Nasrallah is the party's first secretary-general from the south. Since his ascendancy, Hezbollah's upper echelons have been splintered along the long-standing Bekaa-southern divide despite the appearance of party cohesion. In sharp contrast to Shiites in the Bekaa, who looked outside the borders of Lebanon for identification, southern Lebanese Shiites were hardly attracted to Arab nationalism or pan-Syrianism and, instead, immersed themselves in local politics.

It was Nasrallah's personal decision to ally Hezbollah with Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement. His two predecessors, Subhi Tufaili and

Abbas Musawi, both from the Bekaa, were less involved with Lebanese politics and worked primarily with Tehran and its representatives. The coming together of Nasrallah and Aoun did not signify ideological affinity or a sense of common cause: Their true perceptions of each other ranged from hostility to lack of interest. Nasrallah once described Aoun as a man "who only thinks of himself and his sect, and views members of other sects from the perspective of Maronite racism."⁹ Less than six months before signing their memorandum, Aoun said he had two reservations that prevented him from collaborating with Nasrallah: "His intolerable preconditions for dialogue, and his relations with Syria and Iran."¹⁰ Overcoming these perceptions to work together was a matter of practical politics against a common enemy. In reality, Hezbollah has given less and gotten more than the Free Patriotic Movement.

Maintaining the Shiite-Maronite alliance

⁹ *An-Nahar* (Beirut), Nov. 6, 1989.

¹⁰ *Al-Balad* (Beirut), Aug. 14, 2007.



The flag of Hezbollah flying over this missile launcher is a grim reminder of the largely unrestrained military might of the Shiite group. The joint memorandum of understanding signed by Nasrallah and Aoun aimed in part to legitimize Shiite militarism.

nominally requires concessions from both sides. For example, Hezbollah's 1985 manifesto specifically states the goal of building an Islamic state in Lebanon.¹¹ In view of Hezbollah's strong ideological orientation, there is no reason to assume that it has shelved the idea. But Hezbollah's domination of Lebanon was unthinkable in the 1980s when the movement's manifesto was written, and its leaders, especially Nasrallah, have learned the necessity for deemphasizing ideology in the name of politics and long-term strategy. For these reasons, Hezbollah tolerates Aoun's demands for expensive infrastructure and development plans, reform of state finances and the civil service, and the questionable biographies of some of his officials. Since the alliance with Aoun serves Hezbollah's long-term plans for Lebanon, the group also tends to downplay the involvement of Lebanese Christians in working with Israel. Thus, Hezbollah refrained from commenting on

11 Hezbollah manifesto, Beirut, Feb. 16, 1985, For a Better Lebanon, trans., Feb. 18, 2008.

the high profile treason and espionage case of Fayez Karam, a senior official in Aoun's FPM, and influenced the military tribunal to give him a lenient sentence.¹²

Aoun is not oblivious to Hezbollah's strategy but feels his alliance with it will eventually secure the presidency for him.¹³ He seems willing to tolerate Hezbollah's messianic religious ideology as long as it can help him maintain his status as the principal Maronite politician. Still, he appears uneasy about his alliance with Hezbollah; despite leading a bloc

consisting of ten cabinet members and twenty-seven parliamentary deputies, Aoun realizes that failing to heed Hezbollah's dictates will cause a falling out with Lebanese Shiites and the Syrian regime.¹⁴

TENSIONS ABOUND

Despite their political alliance, there are clear conflicts of interest between the two partners. Hezbollah expects the alliance will eventually enable it to deconstruct the Lebanese political system and recast it in its theocratic mold, but the FPM needs to give the impression that Hezbollah is part of a national alliance and to make sure that the government does not question its military component. Hezbollah's need to operate with both Shiite and Sunni fac-

12 *As-Siyasa* (Kuwait), Sept. 8, 2011; *as-Safir* (Beirut), Jan. 25, 2012.

13 Ali Abdul'al, "Ta'haluf Aoun-Hezbollah," *Az-Zawiya al-Khadra* (Beirut), Feb. 9, 2006.

14 *Al-Akhbar* (Beirut), Dec. 13, 2012.

Hezbollah expects the alliance will enable it to recast the political system in a theocratic mold.

tions has led to conflicts with the FPM. For example, Hezbollah decided to join Prime Minister Najib Mikati in voting against the FPM-backed minimum wage increase which, if passed, would have created major financial burdens on Lebanon's sluggish economy. But to attenuate Aoun's fury at Hezbollah, the movement instructed its labor union activists and school representatives to participate in a one-day general strike to protest against the vote.¹⁵

Aoun did not seem to fully comprehend the extent of Hezbollah's commitment to keeping Mikati's government in place.¹⁶ In fact, Hezbollah invested heavily in facilitating the formation of Mikati's cabinet and went so far as coercing the Amal Movement to give up one of its cabinet portfolios to Mikati so that he could appoint another Sunni from Tripoli, his hometown.¹⁷ Mikati's is the first cabinet since the 1989 Ta'if accords that includes more Sunnis (seven) than Shiites (five). This was the price that Shiites had to pay in order to form an apolitical cabinet to maintain the status quo that favors Hezbollah. In contrast, the FPM seems persistently outmaneuvered.

In post-Ta'if Lebanese politics, the Syrians encouraged the extension of the term in office of the Lebanese president for three years, in addition to the regular six-year term, on the basis of a constitutional amendment on a one-time basis. The reelection of President Elias Hrawi in 1995 was uneventful, but renewing the term of President Emile Lahoud in 2004 was met with stiff opposition, and calls for his resignation mounted after the Hariri assassination and the formation of the March 14 coalition. While Lahoud could understand why Sunnis would oppose his reelection, he expressed dismay at Christian leaders in the coalition who demanded his resignation: "It is regrettable that those

Christians do not appreciate the strategic importance of my alliance with Hezbollah and the Syrian regime."¹⁸ Lahoud implied

that he was allied with the Alawite leadership of Syria.

Shiites in Hezbollah and Amal have endorsed the Maronite church's proposal to enact the draft electoral law for transforming Lebanon into one electoral constituency, which would allow each community to elect its own parliamentary deputies.¹⁹ Better known as the Boutros Commission, the draft law would, in effect, prevent the predominantly Sunni voters in Beirut, Tripoli, and Akkar from deciding which Christian candidates would win in the elections. This explains why Sunni politicians and civil society activists have fiercely denounced the draft electoral law.

PROBLEMS FOR CHRISTIANS AND SHIITES

The present alliance between Nasrallah and Aoun coalesces rural Shiites and Maronites against urban Sunnis, bringing together the legacy of Shiite dispossession and Maronite incipient sense of political loss. Unlike previous Shiite-Maronite alliances, such as the one between feudal Shiite leaders and Maronite politicians (1920-58), and Sadr's rapport with the Maronite political establishment (1959-78), which were based on mutual strategic interests, the present one between the FPM and Hezbollah is an alliance of hypocrisy. Less than a year after the two sides signed their memorandum of understanding, FPM parliamentary deputy Ibrahim Kanaan told then-U.S. ambassador in Lebanon Jeffrey Feltman that Aoun was "the last person in Lebanon who wants to see

15 Ibid., Dec. 15, 2011.

16 Ibid., Dec. 10, 2011.

17 *Naharnet* (Lebanon), June 14, 2011.

18 *Al-Mustaqbal* (Beirut), Feb. 18, 2006.

19 *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Dec. 21, 2011.

Maronites view the Arab uprisings as an unfolding disaster for Middle East Christians.

Hezbollah's militia keep its arms."²⁰ But long-term trends suggest problems for both Christians and Shiites.

Neither Nasrallah nor Aoun seem to understand the extent of Lebanese Sunni frustration and their amenability to radicalization. Sheikh Muhammad Hassan, leader of the little known Free Shiite Trend, unsuccessfully implored Hezbollah to use reason and dialogue in communicating with the Sunni mainstream.²¹ Instead, the movement chose to invade Beirut in May 2008 and topple Saad Hariri's cabinet in 2011. Nevertheless, Aoun, who often makes imprudent statements to describe Sunnis, believes that "a Shiite-Maronite alliance provides the only means to confront their threat, especially after the beginning of the Syrian uprising."²²

Similar warnings for Hezbollah are appearing from other Lebanese factions. Maverick Shiite cleric Hani Fahs warned the movement's leadership against taking advantage of the weakness of the Lebanese state to monopolize political power to the detriment of society at large, and Sunnis in particular. He urged them to "avoid letting the Shiites face the fate of the Maronites."²³ Sunni writer Abdulhamd Ahdab urged Hezbollah to "revamp itself and decide to become an integral part of the Lebanese state, instead of scheming to steal it."²⁴ Later, he predicted that the "Shiite awakening is bound to lead to the rise of a counter Sunni awakening that can only lead to the disintegration of the state."²⁵ Former Hezbollah secretary-general Subhi Tufaili disparaged Nasrallah for unnecessarily antagonizing Lebanese Sunnis. He argued that the latter's policies risked undermining Shiite achievements of the past three decades, predicting that when the Sunnis mobi-

lized politically, "Nasrallah will find himself compelled to ally himself with Israel against the Sunnis."²⁶ Clashes in Tripoli between

Sunni Lebanese factions supporting the Syrian opposition and Alawites aligned with the Assad regime, and the presence of Sunni Hizb ut-Tahir and other radical caliphate groups, threaten to renew wider sectarian conflict throughout Lebanon. Neither Shiite nor Sunni commentators, however, are expressing much concern for the Maronite community or for Middle Eastern Christians.

THE SHIITE-MARONITE NEXUS AND THE ARAB UPRISINGS

Hezbollah's support for the Arab uprisings has been perfunctory at best. The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt advanced Sunni Islamist groups to the center stage of their countries' politics. Morocco did not witness an uprising, yet its general elections clearly demonstrated the strength of the Islamist movement. The Arab uprisings have revealed the strength of Sunni religious sentiment, and a Sunni revival is not something that Hezbollah welcomes, seeing this as something bound to stimulate Lebanese Sunnis, especially if the Syrian uprising leads to the ouster of the Assad regime.

By and large, Hezbollah's comments on the uprisings, including the unrest in Syria, have been muted, but in October 2011, Nasrallah made a rare public appearance to express support for the Assad regime and its "reforms."²⁷ In March 2012, he issued a statement on video warning of civil war in Syria and calling for both sides to seek a political solution. These comments must be seen in the context of the alliance between Hezbollah, Damascus, and Tehran—which has

20 *Ya Libnan* (Beirut), Oct. 3, 2011.

21 *Al-Mustaqbal*, Mar. 7, 2007.

22 *Now Lebanon* (Beirut), May 20, 2011.

23 *An-Nahar*, Nov. 24, 2009.

24 *Ibid.*, Jan. 13, 2006.

25 *Ibid.*, Mar. 3, 2007.

26 Subhim Tufaili, interview, MTV (Beirut), Jan. 30, 2012.

27 *The National* (Abu Dhabi), Oct. 26, 2011.

been strained by the Assad regime's violent repression of the uprising—and in the context of world and Lebanese opinion. At the same time, reports that Damascus continues to transfer weapons to Hezbollah and to train its operatives in the use of advanced weaponry²⁸ suggest that the organization's military needs ultimately trump its concerns regarding peaceful politics within Lebanon.

Maronite reaction to the uprisings has been similarly unenthusiastic, viewing them, by and large, as an unfolding disaster for Middle East Christians. Former Lebanese president Amin Jemayyil's response to the Syrian uprising has been lukewarm, and he appeared mostly concerned about its effects on Syria's Christian minority. Maronite patriarch Bishara al-Ra'i has ridiculed the notion of the "Arab spring," preferring to name it the "Arab winter." He considered the Syrian regime "the closest Arab political system to democracy."²⁹

For his part, the prominent Lebanese Christian writer Michael Young has lamented the Maronites' alliance with Hezbollah and their antipathy to the Arab uprisings. In the fall of 2011, he wrote:

Maronites have the institutions, talent, and memory to reverse their community's steady mediocrization. What they don't have is the self-assurance required to reinvent themselves in the shadow of their demographic decline ... [They] have adjusted to this decline by accommodating the view that their minority has a stake in allying itself with other minorities, no matter how repressive these may be. Such is the path to communal suicide.³⁰

²⁸ *The Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 23, 2012.

²⁹ *As-Siyasa*, Mar. 14, 2012.

³⁰ Michael Young, "Maronites Pray to a Dispiriting Trinity," *The Daily Star* (Beirut), Sept. 22, 2011.



Maronite reaction to the Arab uprisings throughout the Middle East has been largely unenthusiastic although neither Shi'ite nor Sunni commentators seem worried for the Maronite community or for Middle Eastern Christians. But Maronite patriarch Bishara al-Ra'i (above) has ridiculed the notion of an "Arab spring," preferring to call it the "Arab winter."

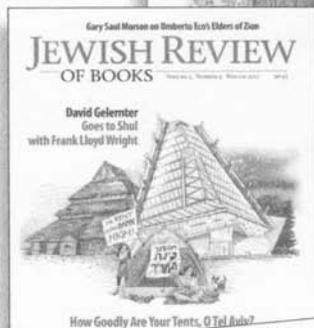
It is indeed ironic that the Lebanese Maronites who, in the nineteenth century labored hard to plant the seeds of liberal Western values in the Arab east, chose in the second decade of the twenty-first century to digress and dissociate themselves from the Arab uprisings, especially in Syria. Columnist Jihad Zein has expressed bewilderment, asking "why those educated and suave Christians treat the region's most modernizing era in many decades with reservation, if not outright hostility?"³¹

The short answer is that Lebanese Maronites are worried about the implications of the Arab uprisings for their own fate as a minority group whereas Shiites dread the consequences the upheaval might have on their pan-Shiite project. This unease bodes ill for Lebanon as a whole.

³¹ *An-Nahar*, Sept. 14, 2011.

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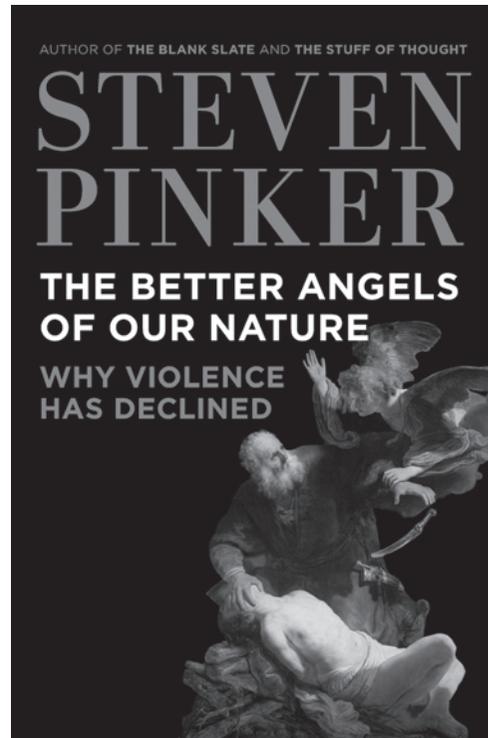
Brief Reviews

The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined. By Steven Pinker. New York: Viking, 2011. 832 pp. \$40. **Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict.** By Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. New York: Columbia Press, 2011. 320 pp. \$29.50.

The world these days hardly seems like a peaceful place. But recent scholarship offers room for optimism.

First, Pinker offers mountains of historical evidence that the world is actually less violent today than ever before and that this trend shows no signs of reversing. With over a hundred graphs and charts, he documents how violence is at its nadir globally in terms of rape, infanticide, genocide, wife-beating, slavery, torture, war, homicide rates, and even animal cruelty. His data show that life in pre-state societies was comparatively Hobbesian—nasty, brutish, and short. For instance, prehistoric graves from hunter-gatherers reveal violent deaths five to ten times that of modern Europe. And from 1300 C.E. to today, the odds of being murdered has plummeted by up to fifty times. Violence of all stripes began to decline markedly during the Enlightenment and has fallen off precipitously since World War II.

Pinker does not sugarcoat the horrors of the twentieth century, especially the ravages of World War II, which killed 55 million people, an unprecedented figure in absolute terms. He notes, however, that this highly lethal event relative to the worldwide population did not break historical records. In relative terms, World War II ranks as only the ninth most deadly event over the past 1,200 years. In eighth-century C.E. China, the An Lushan civil war killed an estimated thirty-six million people, equivalent to 429 million deaths in the mid-twentieth century. The second most lethal event in relative terms was the thirteenth century Mongol conquest of Asia, which killed forty million people, the equivalent of 278 million around the time of Hitler and Stalin. And the third most



lethal was the Middle East slave trade.

Muslim governments summarily execute criminals, treat adultery as a capital offense, and permit female genital mutilation; but, like the rest of the world, violence in Muslim countries is on the decline. Pinker attributes the reduction of international violence to a host of historical factors that expand the circle of empathy beyond family, tribe, nation, or even species; these include the development of agriculture, state structure, international commerce, literacy, and democracy.

Second, Chenoweth and Stephan provide an alternative causal mechanism, demonstrating statistically that nonviolent protest outperforms violent resistance. They compare the political outcomes of over 300 campaigns between 1900 and 2006 in which non-state actors demanded that governments accommodate their demands. All

else being equal, the use of violence in these campaigns lowered the odds of government compliance. If research, particularly by this author, suggests that terrorist violence impedes government concessions, Chenoweth and Stephan broaden the argument by showing how all forms of non-state violence may be politically counterproductive.

If so, then aggrieved groups have a powerful incentive to avoid violent escalation, which may account for its growing scarcity. Indeed, the Arab upheavals are as much a repudiation of al-Qaeda's extreme means as its extreme ends.

Max Abrahms
Johns Hopkins University

Bin Laden's Legacy: Why We're Still Losing the War on Terror. By Daveed Gartenstein-Ross. Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2012. 266 pp. \$25.95.

On the demise of Osama bin Laden, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has announced that victory over al-Qaeda is now within reach. But Gartenstein-Ross of the Foundation for the De-

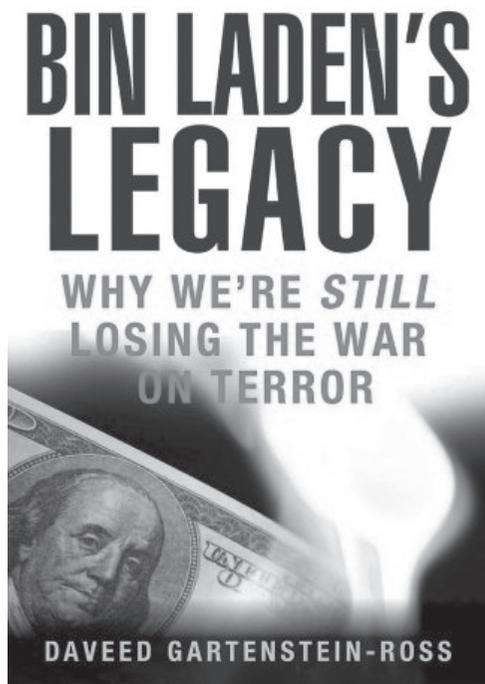
fense of Democracies argues that the U.S. government is in a far weaker position relative to al-Qaeda now than prior to 9/11 due to its failure to grasp al-Qaeda's grand strategy.

One of the foundational beliefs of al-Qaeda is that the cost of prosecuting the Soviet-Afghan war contributed to the collapse of the Soviet economy. Gartenstein-Ross contends that al-Qaeda's current strategy toward the United States is of a piece with that approach: Escalating the conflict with the United States in as many arenas as possible will drive up the costs of defense measures, bleeding the U.S. economy.

Gartenstein-Ross finds that U.S. policymakers have not adapted well to al-Qaeda's strategy. Duplication of efforts and the politicization of the issue have both driven up budgets and soured the citizenry on the task at hand. By broadening the focus on the war on terrorism through the invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration diverted critical resources from Afghanistan, allowing the Taliban and al-Qaeda to rebuild their organizations, and simultaneously presented Islamists with a stage from which they could mobilize Muslims around the world for a "defensive" jihad. With U.S. attention focused elsewhere, al-Qaeda expanded its operations into more theaters, including Yemen and the Horn of Africa. Nor have the Arab upheavals of 2011 been a major setback for al-Qaeda; the author argues that the terrorist group is well positioned to take advantage of the turmoil. If the new governments cannot fulfill the rising expectations of the Arab people, then extremist ideologies offering simple solutions could flourish.

In order to defeat al-Qaeda and the jihadist threat, Gartenstein-Ross calls for depoliticizing the war on terror. To be sustainable over the long haul, the expense of national security must be reduced, and to that end, he offers a series of policy recommendations and reforms in intelligence and similar areas. To help Americans survive terrorist attacks, efforts should be made to build community resilience. Finally, he calls for lessening U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

Cogently argued and well-written, Gartenstein-Ross' study will be of great interest to those who want a better understanding of the strategic



dimensions of the global war on terror as well as those seeking solid policy recommendations for U.S. national security.

George Michael
U.S. Air Force Counterproliferation Center

The Fertile Soil of Jihad: Terrorism’s Prison Connection. By Patrick T. Dunleavy. Dulles, Va.: Potomac, 2011. 192 pp. \$27.50.

Islamist terror networks have made recruitment of disenfranchised individuals such as prison inmates a top priority, former New York State corrections official Dunleavy writes in his powerful new book. A 26-year veteran of the New York State Department of Correctional Services, he played a major role in Operation Hades, an investigation into radical Islamic recruiting activities involving New York prisons, a process going on for decades and, in some respects, abetted by government actions.

Dunleavy focuses on the case of Abdel Nasser Zaben, a West Bank native and Hamas member. Zaben illegally entered the United States in 1990, moved to Brooklyn and attended the al-Farouq mosque, home to Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, now serving a life sentence for his role in a 1995 terror plot. Zaben and an Islamist accomplice robbed people at gunpoint until Zaben was arrested in 1993 and sentenced to eighteen years in prison. Throughout his twelve years behind bars—he was paroled in 2005, deported to the West Bank and has subsequently disappeared—he worked tirelessly to recruit his fellow inmates for jihad. Zaben had a huge pool of potential terrorists to work with—some of them already radicalized Muslims.

According to Dunleavy, radical prison networks were already in place, established by ex-convicts like Warith Deen Umar, who served as director of Ministerial Services for the state corrections department, and Cyril Rashid, appointed by Umar as imam at a maximum-security prison in upstate New York. Inmates like Zaben became clerks for prison imams around the state, further cementing the radicalization process. Efforts to do background checks on Islamic clergy were hampered by the fact that the only certifying bodies seem to be run by Umar and like-minded individuals.

Despite the recent campaign of demonization launched against Rep. Peter King for his hearings on domestic radicalization in and outside prisons, *The Fertile Soil of Jihad* makes evident the clear and present danger.

Joel Himelfarb
Investigative Project on Terrorism



The Green Movement in Iran. By Hamid Dabashi. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011. 174 pp. \$34.95.

On June 12, 2009, Iranians went to the polls to choose a president from among a handful of candidates approved by clerics who are not elected but rather appointed. As voters moved to toss out incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the government intervened to award the unpopular president a second term. The blatant fraud proved too much for ordinary Iranians who poured into the streets in a protest that rocked the Islamic Republic to its core. From this outrage was born the so-called “Green Movement,” an amorphous

group with nearly as many goals as leaders.

Dabashi, an Iranian studies and comparative literature professor at Columbia University, purports to analyze the Green Movement in this short book, which, in actuality, is mainly a compilation of op-eds and online essays he wrote as events unfolded.

Readers seeking to understand recent Iranian politics will be disappointed. Dabashi fails to illuminate the makeup of the Green Movement or its goals. Nor does he differentiate between ordinary Iranians who seek a freer Iran and the career politicians who cloak themselves in the movement but remain loyal to a theocratic system.

Rather than seriously analyze events, Dabashi indulges in potshots at authors whose books have received greater critical and public acclaim than his. He calls Azar Nafisi, the best-selling author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, a “charlatan,” and he accuses Stanford University’s Abbas Milani of purveying “Neocon chicanery.”

And if the Islamic Republic, among the world’s worst violators of human rights, is Dabashi’s ostensible topic, Israel is his obsession. He decries Israel as “a racist apartheid state,” and labels Israel’s claim to be the region’s only democracy a “ludicrous joke.” Dabashi’s obsession leads him down curious byways. He accuses Israelis and “American Zionists” of being disappointed by the Green Movement, a simple falsehood. Indeed, while Dabashi was shilling for the Islamic Republic, many of those he vents against sought U.S. policies to empower the Iranian people at the expense of the regime.

Dabashi is not just best known for his embrace of former colleague Edward Said and his own over-the-top condemnations of U.S. policy but he is also a wretched writer, unable to escape the jargon of academic theory to communicate a point. He substitutes polemic for research; his book is more rant than scholarship.

On many levels, then, *The Green Movement in Iran* is a terrible book. If it has any silver lining, it spectacularly illustrates why few outside the academy take Iranian studies professors seriously.

Michael Rubin

Political Islam, Citizenship, and Minorities: The Future of Arab Christians in the Islamic Middle East. By Andrea Zaki Stephanous. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2010. 243 pp. \$37.50, paper.

As the Middle East smolders under the threat of an Islamist resurgence, too little has been written about the plight of Arab Christians and other native minorities. Stephanous’s *Political Islam, Citizenship, and Minorities* would be a welcome addition to this meager repertoire—except for its excessive and largely irrelevant theorizing.

Stephanous, a Coptic Evangelical Protestant based in Cairo, sets out by surveying the region’s political trends in the twentieth century, including the Arab Christian contribution to the formulation of Arab nationalism. He focuses mainly on the Copts of Egypt and the Maronites of Lebanon, recognizing clear differences in their respective historical experiences. Unfortunately, he fails to articulate these differences as starkly as necessary where the *dhimmitude* (second-class but protected status) of the Copts contrasts with the relative freedom of the Maronites. Further, he repeats the hackneyed accusation leveled against the Maronites by their 1970s leftist Palestine Liberation Organization and Islamist opponents that they initiated the 1975 Lebanese civil war to protect their political privileges. This narrative is false; Maronites defended the last remaining free Christian community in the Middle East from vicious attack.

Stephanous strains to find answers to how Arab Christians can integrate into a Middle East influenced by political Islam. After wandering through a maze of conceptual abstractions like “advocacy,” “networking,” “civil society organizations,” and “institutionalizations of identity,” he lands on his favorite panacea—“dynamic citizenship”—defined ambiguously as “an inclusive process that reaches beyond equality to justice by relating political rights to economic, social, and cultural realities.” The author seems to be in favor of a deliberate distancing of Arab Christians from the ever-colonial West, in favor of some sort of revival of authentic local affiliations. Somehow, a resurrected secular Arab nationalism coupled with a new understanding of citizenship

will alleviate the multiple perils facing the region's Christians emanating from Salafism, the stifling state, and *dhimmi* marginalization. The recipe is unconvincing, and the presumed end result is incoherent.

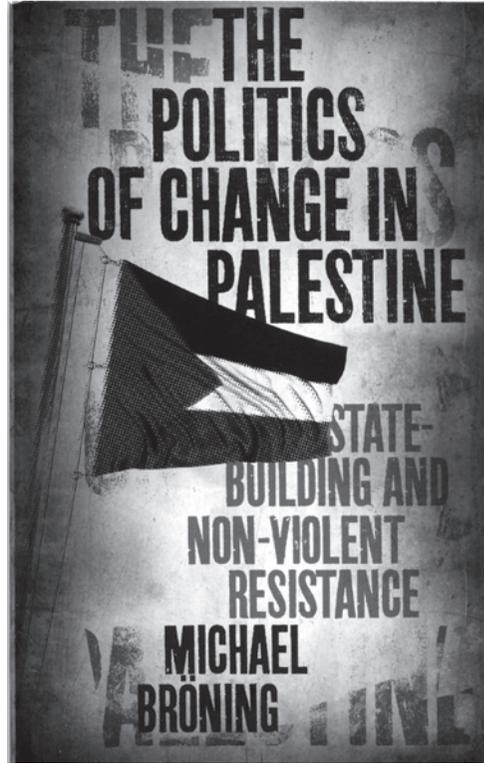
The book does offer interesting details on Islamist groups plus useful tabulated statistics about issues such as infant mortality, life expectancy, arms expenditures, minority populations, and more. The overall treatment, however, misses the many complexities and nuances of a place like Lebanon while inflating optimism regarding the prospects for inclusion for the Copts of Egypt. Sadly, the book represents an essentially *dhimmi*—and therefore highly inadequate—response to the grave dangers besetting Arab Christians.

Habib C. Malik
Lebanese American University

The Politics of Change in Palestine: State-Building and Non-Violent Resistance. By Michael Bröning. New York and London: Pluto Press, 2011. 247 pp. \$30, paper.

Regurgitating the Palestinian meme that Israeli intransigence has made a two-state solution increasingly difficult, Bröning of the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation lays down cover for unilateral efforts by the Palestinians to gain statehood without negotiating final status issues with Israel. Simply stated, his thesis is that Palestinians have experienced a “general shift away from violent struggle to strategies of nonviolent resistance” while simultaneously building institutions that qualify it for statehood.

Bröning erroneously asserts that the violent Hamas faction has undertaken this nonviolent transformation in cooperation with its rival Fatah, stating that we are now witnessing “Hamas 2.0.” He further claims that “Hamas leaders have refrained from publicly embracing the charter” of the organization that openly calls for Israel’s annihilation. However, as recently as February 2012, Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas leader based in Gaza, called again for Israel’s destruction. “The resistance will continue until all the Palestinian land, including al-Quds, is liberated and all the refugees return,” he said.¹



The author correctly observes that Fatah’s corruption brought about its own political demise but insists that the new party program “demonstrates a fundamental shift away from decades of armed struggle” toward nonviolent resistance. He claims its terror squad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, was “disbanded,” despite its May 2011 official proclamation that the death of Osama bin Laden was a “catastrophe.”² More recently, in February 2012, the group fired rockets into Israel from the Gaza Strip.³ Indeed, the group appears to be experiencing a resurgence.

A chapter titled “PNA State-Building: Putting Palestine on the Map” is informative but fawning. While describing the process by which Palestinian leaders have laid the foundation for their 2011 statehood drive, particularly the activities of Salam Fayyad, Bröning can barely contain his

1 *Al-Manar* website (Lebanon), Feb. 11, 2012.

2 *The Jerusalem Post*, May 3, 2011.

3 Maan News Agency, Feb. 28, 2012.

giddiness. Similarly, in “Beyond Terror: Politicizing Non-Violent Resistance,” the author conveniently ignores the continuing torrent of rockets out of Gaza while all but openly endorsing the boycott, divest and sanctions movement against Israel.

Despite its many flaws, *The Politics of Change in Palestine* offers a glimpse into current Palestinian attempts to achieve statehood by undermining Israel’s right to exist. As importantly, the book provides insight into the minds of European supporters of this effort.

Jonathan Schanzer
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Power and Politics in the Persian Gulf Monarchies. Edited by Christopher Davidson. London: Hurst and Co., 2012. 203 pp. £17.99, paper.

Recent Middle Eastern upheavals have centered on the Mediterranean littoral, not the Persian Gulf—and with them the bulk of attention. *Power and Politics in the Persian Gulf Monarchies* remedies that deficit with a concise and in-

formative volume about the six countries that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The gulf states share a number of similar tendencies and challenges but operate in different contexts, thereby producing different results. Saudi Arabia—the powerhouse of the group—must necessarily adopt different approaches when accommodating the needs of its nearly thirty million subjects than neighboring Bahrain which hosts a population of under one million.

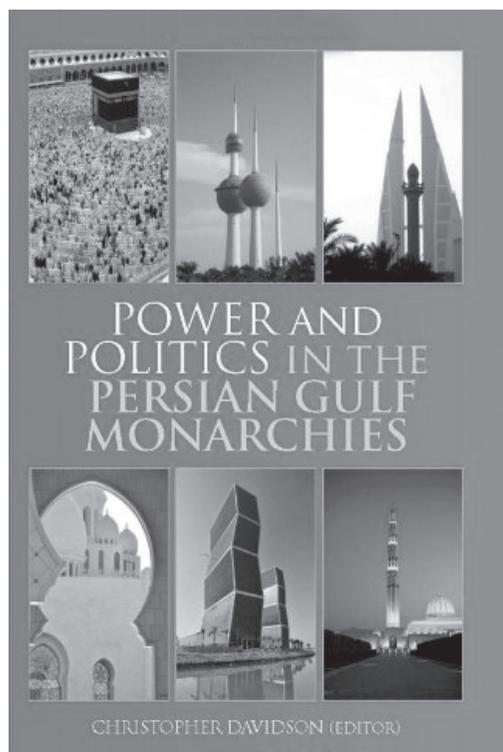
These differences notwithstanding, certain themes recur in all six essays: a reliance on hydrocarbon rents and imported labor and a concentration of power in the hands of hereditary monarchies. The issue of political succession presents uncertainties; though most states have designated heirs, formal systems scarcely exist to determine the procedure by which these successors are decided. While this affords an incumbent ruler flexibility, it also generates its own problems: in Saudi Arabia, none of the candidates are under sixty-five.

None of the states are stagnant, however, and all have repeatedly announced reforms to their systems in recent years. Yet as Jane Kinninmont notes in her essay on Bahrain, even the reformists present their changes as gifts bestowed upon subjects rather than rights earned or due a citizenry.

Bahrain did witness a significant rise in political tensions during 2011. The Sunni monarchy—with the assistance of other GCC states—crushed a nascent mobilization of the Shiite majority population. However, whereas the uprisings around the Mediterranean were characterized by the participation of forces that did not constitute the countries’ traditional opposition currents, the same cannot not be said in Bahrain where the protests were led by the long-standing Shiite opposition.

Qatar is another anomaly: The country’s natural gas stocks are abundant and enable the regime to placate its small domestic population, making it an unlikely candidate for domestic unrest. Yet in light of its adventurous foreign policy, Davidson boldly states that Qatar is the most likely to experience a coup or an invasion.

Unlike the republics now experiencing vola-



tility—where earlier political and social change had been introduced quickly—the GCC states have become increasingly adept at resisting being confronted by instability. This is not to say that they do not face challenges, but that they have a longer time frame to respond to them and to head them off.

Richard Phelps
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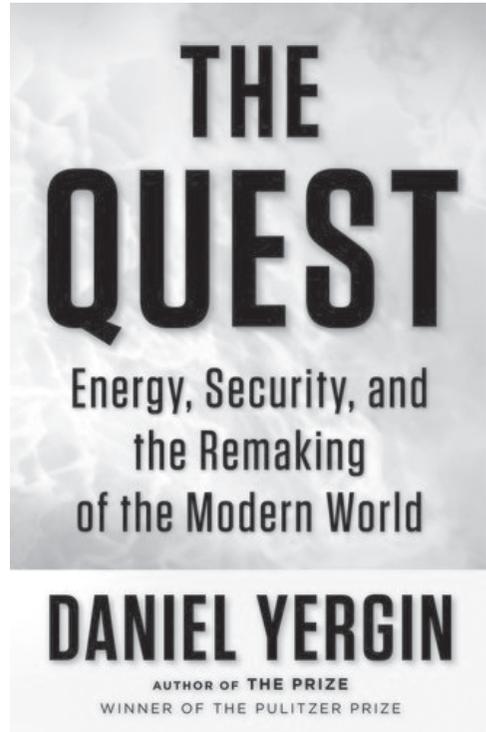
The Quest: Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World. By Daniel Yergin. New York: Penguin Press, 2011. 816 pp. \$37.95.

No other public policy issue is so critical yet as nuanced and poorly understood as energy. This makes Yergin’s attempt in *The Quest* to guide nonexpert readers through the energy maze a worthy one.

Yergin examines how global energy demand will be met in an era which, despite the current slowdown, promises unprecedented economic growth. In a hype-free manner, he covers almost every form of energy. He describes the fundamentals of supply and demand, the challenges facing the oil industry and the electric power sector, and the dilemmas they face in light of the changing geopolitical landscape and the growing political pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Yergin’s outlook on energy echoes the mainstream thinking of the petroleum industry. He is not worried the world is running out of oil and has great faith in nonconventional oil and natural gas, particularly the promising but controversial shale gas. His treatment of potential competitors to oil in the transportation fuel market (whether liquid, gaseous, or electric) as well as of renewable sources of electricity ranges between cautious optimism and gentle skepticism.

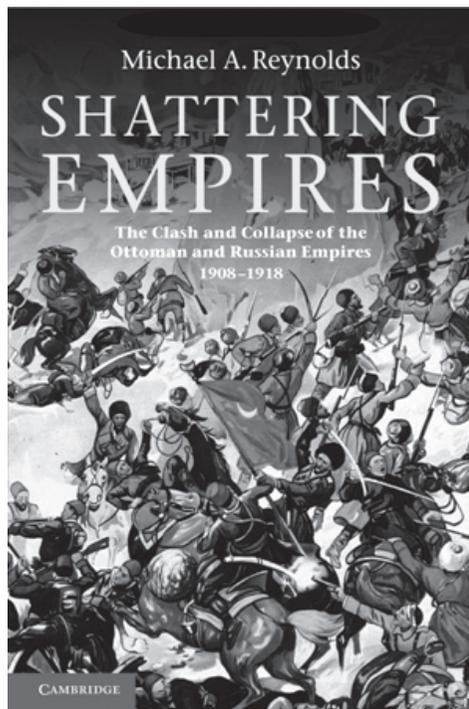
Oil’s status as a strategic commodity derives from its virtual monopoly as fuel for transportation. Policies that either increase oil supply or curb demand will not reduce oil’s strategic importance and are easy for the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to counteract by throttling down their own supply. The fivefold rise in oil prices of the past decade is, according to Yergin, mainly a result of



demand shock emanating from developing Asia. At the same time, OPEC, which controls 79 percent of the world’s conventional oil reserves, has barely increased its production capacity compared to what it produced thirty years ago and is oddly exempted from responsibility by Yergin.

But despite this omission, Yergin’s panoramic book is one of great importance. The global energy landscape is evolving rapidly. Very few could have predicted a few years ago that the state of North Dakota would become America’s fourth largest oil producer, that China would become the world’s largest energy consumer, or that the discovery of vast hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean would turn energy-poor countries like Israel and Cyprus into important players in the world’s natural gas market. All of these unpredictable changes demonstrate the importance of books such as Yergin’s and that the quest for new energy resources will continue to be one of humanity’s prime preoccupations.

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Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908-1918. By Michael A. Reynolds. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 324 pp. \$90 (\$31.99, paper).

Shattering Empires traces the course of foreign relations between the Ottoman and Russian empires from the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 to the end of World War I. Reynolds of Princeton University examines Russia's policies toward eastern Anatolia and highlights the way interstate competition shaped local identities and politics through the introduction of the concept of the national state.

Reynolds aims to show how the confrontation between the Ottoman and Russian states contributed to the collapse of both empires and to the birth of a new kind of politics in the region. He recounts the rivalry between the two empires and their downfall between 1908-18. The book is thematically rather than chronologically arranged; about one-third concerns the prewar years, and the rest is evenly divided between the period of 1914-16 and the remaining war years.

The author argues that "geopolitical compe-

tion and emergence of a new global interstate order provide the key to understanding the course of history in the Ottoman-Russian borderlands in the twentieth century." He illustrates the influence of nationalism on interstate politics in the Middle East and Eurasia and explores the ways in which states create and impose ethno-nationalist categories and identities.

However, the study has one significant problem. Although Reynolds does not categorize the Armenian events of 1915 as genocide, he mentions "the whole destruction of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War" and refers to "the effective eradication of the presence in Anatolia of [Armenians]." In fact, 1,295,000 Armenians lived in the Ottoman empire in 1914; 702,900 of these were subject to relocations in 1915-16, and very large numbers of the displaced persons survived their displacement, according to official documents of the Ottoman court.

Still the book remains highly original and insightful, and the author manifests not only a command of the subject matter but a profound understanding of the Ottoman and Russian positions. His objectivity and balanced judgment in most matters places this book at the top among works on Ottoman-Russian relations during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Yücel Güçlü
Kavaklıdere/Ankara

Undercover Muslim: A Journey into Yemen. By Theo Padnos. London: Bodley Head, 2011. 293 pp. £12.99.

Every year, hundreds of Westerners abandon life in affluent societies in favor of a sojourn in austere piety in Yemen. *Undercover Muslim* examines those who journey to the country in search of a lifestyle deemed as a better way to fulfill Islamic orthodoxy.

Padnos travelled to Yemen to learn Arabic, and after a stint working as a journalist, converted to Islam. He assumed an Arabic name, pursued Qur'anic study, and immersed himself among those who came to do the same. The chronicle of his experiences in *Undercover Muslim* prompts far more questions than it answers. Did he, as the "undercover" in the title suggests, assume this

lifestyle with an exposé in mind from the very start? The author presents his conversion and adopted lifestyle as genuine, yet he repeatedly appears skeptical of the intellectual tunnel-vision he witnesses.

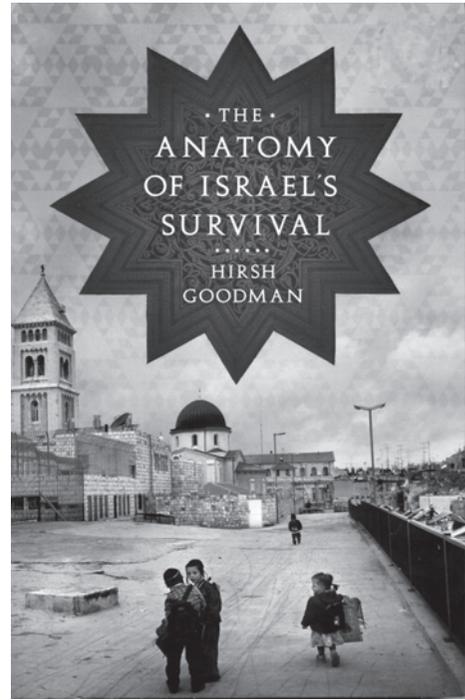
Alternatively, is Padnos himself a drifter, like those about whom he writes? In his telling, travelers to Yemen are as much wastrels as pilgrims. Padnos quotes one: “I’ve had a difficult childhood for sure,” then adds, “He had been thrown out of schools, beaten by his stepfather, and arrested by police.” Many he encounters are fleeing something as much as pursuing something, and the community he lives among is one of suspicion and anonymity. Enquiries into the men’s backgrounds are strictly off limits: “‘Why are you so curious?’ he wondered when I asked about his [French] father’s view of his career. ‘Why aren’t we discussing the unity of God?’” Padnos, too, comes under scrutiny: “The good news is that we don’t think that you’re working for the CIA any more. ... The bad news is that we’ve been watching you. In fact, everyone has remarked about you, and everyone is wondering what you’re really up to.” The latter point is valid.

Undercover Muslim is not a whistle blowing revelation of extremism or militancy. Instead, Padnos quotes one religious student as saying that “it’s just a boring life here” while offering snapshots of a lifestyle distant from the book’s readership. While the work contains some interesting moments of reflection, amusement, and tension, it fails to place the experiences in a framework that examines or illuminates larger issues.

Richard Phelps

The Unmaking of Israel. By Gershom Gorenberg. New York: HarperCollins, 2011. 336 pp. \$25.99 (\$14.99, paper). **The Anatomy of Israel’s Survival.** By Hirsh Goodman. New York: Public Affairs, 2011. 288 pp. \$26.99.

These two books offer well-written examples of a deep schism in Israeli thought, especially among its intellectual, academic, and literary elites, who view Israel’s survival as dependent upon a Palestinian state, the “two-state solution,” and diminishing the power and influence of religious Zionism and the Orthodox, or the “ultra-Orthodox” (*haredim*).



The main threat to Israel, these authors believe, is not the Arabs, but Jews, “settlers,” and the “ultra-Orthodox.” This perspective reflects a breakdown of the old secular, cultural social order that defined the State of Israel during its first three decades. Following a fault line that divides Israeli society and perhaps much of recent Jewish history, it is the context for all debate about the future of Israel.

For Israelis, this change began in the wake of two watershed events: the peace treaty with Egypt (1979) and the war against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon (1982)—which grew into the first *intifada* (1987-92)—and the Oslo accords (1993). Under constant attack by Arab terrorists, Israeli consciousness developed a bi-polarism, an inner turmoil that was the product of the need for self-defense and guilt for winning; constantly at war, or under threat of attack, Israelis craved peace, or anything that promised that illusion. Like the authors, many became true believers of the hype about “land for peace.” Although few may remain convinced that such a solution is possible, the struggle over the nature of Israeli society between the secular and

religious is ongoing and contentious.

Highly intelligent and articulate Jews, Israelis, and Zionists, these authors represent a stratum of influential media people and public opinion and discourse shapers who oppose what they call “the occupation,” those Jewish communities built beyond the 1949 armistice lines, and the growing attraction—which translates into social and political power—of religious Jews, especially.

Gorenberg and Goodman share a sense of *über*-morality based on two principles: (1) thou shalt not rule over the other and (2) the primacy of egalitarianism, secularism, and pluralism. Opposing the right of Jews to live in Judea and Samaria and ending “the occupation” assumes a form of sanctity. Goodman proposes total withdrawal “unilaterally with all the lessons of the painful pullout of the Jewish settlements from Gaza learned” or by a peace agreement that would leave Jews “in Palestine as Israeli citizens, voting in Israeli elections but paying their local taxes to the Palestinian Authority, which would in turn guarantee [their] safety and security.” Gorenberg covers much the same ground, advocating unilateral withdrawal, leaving Jews where they are or “evacuating them immediately [from the territories] without waiting for a signature on a peace agreement.” Both seem utterly oblivious of the risks and probable consequences.

Gorenberg’s recurring theme is the radical, post-Zionist vision that “the state is merely a state, a political means of achieving practical results and not a sacred institution,” adding that the “best definition of a Jewish state [is] the place where Jews can argue with the least inhibition, in the most public way, about what it means to be Jews.” Like New York City? The notion that Israel’s identity as a Jewish state is embedded in a unique

historical and spiritual connection with the Land of Israel, the national homeland of the Jewish people, seems to elude him.

Turning to the religious divide, there are certainly deep disagreements in Israel over the role of the ultra-Orthodox in a modern society. But these are by no means the only societal fissures. Both authors neglect even a superficial discussion of the economic system in which a few families control financial and business empires, monopolies, and cartels. Neither do they deal with any of the socioeconomic issues that were the focus of mass demonstrations throughout the country during the summer of 2011.

With an almost exclusive focus on settlements, occupation, and *haredim*, the two authors have created a tunnel vision that demonizes half the population and dumbs-down most of the rest. Denying reality as well as demonstrable failures—the Oslo accords, the Wye agreements, the withdrawal and expulsion of Jews from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria—the authors instead offer facile arguments that have become unrealistic and irrelevant.

Both books make a fundamental error in not understanding the purpose and place of Zionism as the rebuilding of a Jewish homeland and that the State of Israel is the expression of Jewish sovereignty in that homeland. Although both authors are concerned about the future of the Israel, neither deals with the Jewish nature of the state and its central role in shaping the future of the Jewish people and the third Jewish commonwealth.

Moshe Dann
Jerusalem

